The Representation of the Cathedral in French Visual Culture, 1870-1914

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Volume I - Text

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

Signature: ___ Date: 15/3/06

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Abstract

This thesis presents an analysis of the way in which northern French cathedrals were represented and understood by artists between 1870 and 1914. The period chosen is of particular interest because of its agitated religious and political context, making a Catholic building such as a cathedral an embodiment of the struggles between church and state under the Third Republic.

The issues dealt with in this thesis start with the role played by the representation of French cathedrals in the context of the *Année Terrible* of 1870-1871. The analysis of a number of representations from varied sources demonstrates the importance of the notion of nationalism when considering the cathedrals between the Franco-Prussian War and the beginning of World War One. This issue of nationalism is dealt with further with educational material on cathedrals used during the Third Republic.

The religious and spiritual side of the cathedral is examined through a range of visual documents presenting images from Catholic painters as well as through the connection established between the Church and the State during the *Ralliement.*

A specific focus is given to painters Camille Pissarro and Maximilien Luce, whose representations of cathedrals need to be assessed in terms of their strong anarchist views. This examination demonstrates how anarchism and religious buildings such as cathedrals could work together in images towards the promotion of the anarchist ideal.

Two case studies also allow for a greater depth of understanding of the messages carried by cathedrals between 1870 and 1914. Many artists represented the cathedral

churches of Rouen and Paris, and an analysis of these images brings out the range of ideas which can be associated with cathedrals in the visual arts.

The French cathedral was an essential figure of the visual arts between 1870 and 1914 because of its power of suggestion. It was in turn a Catholic church, a nationalist emblem, an anarchist symbol, and a motif utilised by artists to experiment with new pictorial ideas. Between 1870 and 1914 it took on significant new artistic and political dimensions.

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Introduction

This thesis presents an analysis of the way in which French cathedrals were represented and understood by artists between 1870 and 1914. Following the renaissance of interest in the Middle Ages, which peaked during the Romantic period, and particularly under the Bourbon Restoration, and the subsequent large amount of paintings and art works representing Gothic architecture, this study of the image of cathedrals in France during the early Third Republic is of particular interest for several reasons, altogether political, religious, artistic and social.

First, the period studied, the Third Republic, was one of strong antagonism between Church and State in France. In a context of widespread anticlericalism on the one hand, and strong Catholicism on the other, with many different positions in between, this dissertation will suggest what a cathedral could represent when it was painted on a canvas and put on display, or drawn for publications such as magazines and schoolbooks, and how it might be interpreted.

Second, the artists interested in painting cathedrals and writing about them came from very different political and religious backgrounds, in a Republican era which also saw the development of movements as varied and opposed as anarchism and social Catholicism. In a time so rich in changes and in the variety of opinions expressed, this thesis will show how the cathedrals represented by artists could take on a complex range of possible political meanings.

Third, the aftermath of the 1870-1 war provoked patriotic, and sometimes nationalistic, anxieties and passions in France. In such a context, this thesis will demonstrate how this was reflected in the representation of cathedrals, and how a cathedral could become a symbol for the *patrie*. This dissertation will suggest that between 1870 and 1914, French cathedrals participated in the debate about the *revanche* in many ways, be it in widely distributed newspapers, magazines or schoolbooks.

Finally, the period 1870-1914 represents also an era of considerable change in the art domain. This period spans Impressionism, Symbolism, Fauvism and the beginnings of Cubism. Gothic cathedrals were used as subjects for painters to experiment with these new techniques. This dissertation will explain what the cathedrals became in such modern visions and see whether the alliance of the old and the modern created a new meaning for Gothic buildings. But this was also a period in which naturalism, allowing a rich range of stylistic nuance, dominated. How might apparently 'factual' images be analysed to explore the complexity of meaning between apparently objective expressions? This will allow us to suggest how flexible the image of cathedrals can be, even when they are apparently naturalistic and merely descriptive.

This thesis wants to go further than the 'obvious' ways to look at cathedrals; they are more than a Roman Catholic church or a great piece of medieval architecture. Indeed, for a number of artists and writers between 1870 and 1914, they represented more than a place of worship or an interesting historical structure. Cathedrals took multiple forms and aspects. This thesis wants to show the French

cathedrals in a new light, that of medieval monuments which were used to serve multiple purposes beyond what they were built for.

Pierre Nora chose the Gothic cathedral as one of the significant *Lieux de Mémoire* for France and for the French, evidence that these monuments are considered an essential part of the national heritage. Not only are they described by André Vauchez, author of the article on the cathedrals, as "conservatory of the sacred", they also represent "an urban and diocesan memory"[1], telling the story of the city they were built in. Moreover, these two aspects are reinforced by the 'meanings' acquired by the cathedrals throughout the centuries, that of a "Royal Religion" as well as the various ideas associated to the monuments in the 19th century. The influence of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc and that of political figures of the 19th century is not to be neglected in the transformation of French cathedrals into objects of admiration, yet Vauchez admits that "it was poets, artists, and art critics who did more than anyone else to make the cathedrals familiar and cherished". This is particularly relevant to this thesis, as it will show how many artists used the image of the Gothic cathedral and therefore made them even more a part of the national heritage by sharing their visions with their fellow citizens.

Several authors have already published works dealing with the image of French cathedrals during the Third Republic. Elizabeth Emery devoted her study *Romancing the Cathedral* (2001) to the impact of Gothic architecture in fin-de-siècle French culture, exploring in particular how cathedrals were used by novelists like Emile Zola, Joris-Karl Huysmans and Marcel Proust. Emery explains that Zola

the republican glorified Gothic architecture in his novel *Le Rêve* (1888), and that even though it does contain negative references to royalty and domination, "the positive attributes far outweigh the negatives"[2]. Emery concludes that "throughout his work he [Zola] associated the word *cathedral* with dream and ideal"[3], making it in *Le Rêve* the centre of a utopian community. Huysmans's cathedral is different, and is seen in particular in the novel *La Cathédrale* (1898) "both as a work of art and as a reflection of a deeper Catholic meaning"[4]. Finally, Emery explains that Proust's interest in cathedrals is secular: he presents the monuments as "giant mirrors" in which one may find a "living encyclopedia"[5]. These three authors alone indicate something of the range of associations and approaches that cathedrals inspired.

Emery also refers to the fascination with medieval French cathedrals in *Consuming the Past* (2003). In a chapter dedicated to the monuments, she reviews the various forms the enthusiasm for cathedrals took, from writers to the *Comité des Arts et Monuments* and the interest taken by illustrators, whilst also mentioning the nationalist side of cathedrals. In fact, whilst Emery deals primarily with literary sources in both her publications, this thesis will look at the visual arts dimensions of what are mainly the same issues: secularity, religiosity, politics and nationalism.

Another recent publication about cathedrals in the visual arts is Ségolène Le Men's *La Cathédrale illustrée de Hugo à Monet* (1998), in which she deals primarily with Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* illustrations, the engravings used to accompany travel books during the 19th century and approaches such as William

Turner's watercolours, Louis-Auguste and Auguste-Rosalie Bisson's photographs or Charles Nègre's photogravures. All these images, some widely circulated, participated in the renewal of the Gothic in France, from a picturesque viewpoint to the transformations artists made to the cathedral when they used it as a motif. This idea of 'evolution' in the representation of cathedrals is one that this thesis will deal with, taking Notre-Dame de Paris as a case-study, in order to demonstrate how the monument evolved in its representations, from Victor Hugo's illustrators to 'realist' painters, to finally become an 'object' utilised by several modernist artists, thus proving the evolution of a particular image throughout several decades.

These books show that cathedrals functioned in many ways as a cultural icon. It could attract and articulate specific religious, political, aesthetic and other responses. Thus the cathedral was not just a specific building, it was also a generic image, and in both forms was malleable, subject to a kaleidoscopic variety of interpretation.

The Gothic and cathedrals in France before 1870

It is essential to note that the Gothic had a significant cultural presence in France before 1870; however due to lack of space, it is impossible to delve here into the details of the history of Gothic taste. I have thus compiled a chronology which gives an overview of the evolution of Gothic taste and historiography

throughout the centuries (Appendix 1). The main points to consider may be summarised as follows.

It appears that most late 17th and the 18th century writers and philosophers did not think highly of the Gothic, even voicing their dislike of it quite clearly. Jean-Jacques Rousseau claimed for instance in 1753 that "les portails de nos églises gothiques [ne subsistent que] pour la honte de ceux qui ont eu la patience de les faire"[6]. However some interest for Gothic cathedrals was present too, in the form of books describing some of them. One may cite the 1686 *Histoire de l'Eglise Cathédrale de Rouen*[7] or the 1743 *Description nouvelle de la cathédrale de Strasbourg et de sa fameuse Tour*[8]. The end of the 18th century saw the birth of Romanticism in Germany, and with it a strong interest for Gothic monuments, which German writers tried to appropriate to the German culture (this thesis will show that the French did the same later). The English Romantics were also inspired by the Gothic and French Romanticism was inspired by both the German and the English Romantics.

A clear interest for the Middle Ages settled with the Restoration of the Bourbon monarchy (1814-1830), as the new regime wanted to break from the style and images the Napoleonic era had used. Whilst classical forms were associated with the glorious Roman Empire, a return to medieval art signified a return to the monarchy and to the kings of the pre-revolutionary epoch. At the same time, the Restoration tried to rebuild the idea of a nation; Gothic art started to be associated with France in a nationalistic manner.

The interest in Gothic art moved from only being a Romantic element to being present in various domains. The historian Jules Michelet's attraction for the Gothic is evident in his *Histoire de France* (1833-1867), whilst Adolphe-Napoléon Didron provided a platform for Gothic Revivalists with his *Annales Archéologiques* (1844-1881), in which they could publish articles and Gothic Revival designs. Museums and *Sociétés Savantes* also played an essential part in the dissemination of Gothic interest, with the creation of the *Musée des Thermes et de l'hôtel de Cluny* in 1843 (a very large collection of medieval artefacts). Viollet-le-Duc started a series of renovation of medieval buildings in 1839, which culminated in the restoration of several Gothic cathedrals, including Amiens and Notre-Dame de Paris (Fig. 1). As far as art was concerned, many pictorial representations of Gothic monuments appeared in the *Voyages pittoresques et romantiques dans l'ancienne France* (published by Baron Taylor and Charles Nodier between 1821 and 1878, Figs. 2 and 3). The *troubadour* paintings were very fashionable at the Salon in the first quarter of the 19th century, as they represented historical scenes set in atmospheric Gothic settings (Figs. 4 and 5).

Thus the interest in the Gothic grew steadily before 1870 and Gothic art found its way in many domains, whether it be scholarly research, literature, architecture or paintings and drawings. Also, several issues essential to this thesis appeared in the context of the renewed interest for the Gothic: nationalism and Christianity (both themes were developed by the Romantics), as well as the connection between politics and medieval architecture (a crucial element of the Restoration's attempt to connect back to the *Ancien Régime*). Whilst these themes will be dealt

with in detail in this thesis, the following sections will give an overview of the main issues and problems they raise.

The religious versus republic/progress question during the Third Republic and its importance

From the mid-19th century, an increasing number of philosophers and scientists condemned religion. "La science, voilà la lumière, l'autorité, la religion du dix-neuvième siècle"[9], wrote the philosopher Etienne Vacherot in 1856, before denying completely the existence of God in 1868: "l'idée de dieu n'est qu'une représentation de la perfection et n'a d'existence que dans l'esprit humain"[10]. From 1860 onwards, more and more intellectuals adopted a rationalist conception of the universe and followed the positivist theories developed by Auguste Comte (1798-1857) and introduced to the people by Hippolyte Taine, Emile Littré and Ernest Renan. A moral independent from any kind of religiosity was constituted. Religion was considered by many not only out of date, but also unreasonable, for the existence of a god had never been proven.

In 1862, *L'Origine des Espèces* by Darwin was translated into French by Clémence Roger and published with an anticlerical foreword. This was done at a time when Churches continued to maintain the literal meaning of Genesis and consequently fought evolutionary theories[11]. While the Christian conception of man was based on the existence of God in order to explain all creation and the

harmony of the universe, the new Darwinian approach saw man as one of the superior species of life.

In parallel to these scientific developments, republicanism became an increasingly widespread ideology, and with it anti-clericalism. The Third Republic, created in 1870, wanted to stand for progress, to be forward-looking and interested in the future, and it therefore considered religion as a kind of backwards superstition[12]. Moreover, Catholicism was associated with the monarchy, and the Republicans wanted to diminish residual political support for monarchism. Also, while the Republicans supported the ideal of *égalité*, the Church and its hierarchy, which puts the people at the bottom of the pyramid, contradicted the regime's motto. So a paradox can immediately be seen in the fact that many painters who considered themselves modern and forward-looking (Claude Monet, Albert Marquet or Henri Matisse for instance, as well as anarchists such as Camille Pissarro and Maximilien Luce) chose to represent cathedrals, a building which may symbolise the Church with its old-fashioned superstitions and authoritative organisation. Why did these artists choose as subjects monuments which were associated with outdated beliefs? This thesis will even analyze some obviously republican paintings representing cathedrals; why was such a choice made to depict an old Christian structure within a context of modernism and progress? On 4 May 1877 Gambetta exclaimed in a speech at the *Chambre des Députés*: "Le cléricalisme, voilà l'ennemi!"[13]. This battle cry, according to James McMillan, has "come to be seen as the declaration of war which heralded the onset of the French *Kulturkampf*, a struggle between the Third Republic and the Catholic Church

which lasted between 1879 and 1905 and was characterised by the enactment of two major programmes[14] of anticlerical legislation"[15]. In order to fight the Church, the cult of Marianne (the symbolic figure representing the French Republic) became vivid, and municipal councils were allowed from 1878 to change the names of streets and to remove religious emblems from public view. These developments took place because of the election of Jules Grévy as president in 1879 and the establishment of a republican majority in the Chamber the following year. A man with much stronger Republican ideas than his predecessors, he was an anti-clerical and brought doctrinaire Republican ideals into practise. In 1880 the Jesuits were banned because of their support to the Pope and their allegedly dangerous involvement within the educational system. A few years later in 1885, Jules Ferry revealed to Jean Jaurès in a private conversation that his aim was "d'organiser l'humanité sans dieu et sans roi"[16], thus confirming the aim of the Republic.

And indeed, religiosity faded in several domains. In 1880, a law suppressed the obligation to cease work on Sundays. In 1882, primary schools became secular. In 1884, divorce was liberalized and public prayers abandoned. Two years later, primary school staff were secularised. Between 1901 and 1904, several measures were taken against religious congregations: some were forbidden, schools were closed, their possessions were confiscated[17]. Finally, in 1905, a law proclaimed the separation of State and Church.

However, in spite of what may seem like a general tendency towards laicisation, the French remained attached to their traditional faith. The Church had

remained influential, for instance through its numerous private schools. In a way, it is even possible to speak of a spiritual and intellectual "renaissance" in the Church: places of pilgrimage such as Lourdes (with more than a million pilgrims in 1908), Paray le Monial, Fourvières and La Salette attracted crowds. Lourdes is a particularly interesting example because in the midst of the increasing anti-clericalism of the state, its pilgrimage became more and more popular. In 1870, 30,000 pilgrims travelled to Lourdes by train, this number rising to 74,000 in 1875 and to 154,000 in 1895[18]. In fact, the 1846-1890 period was nicknamed "le Temps des Madones" because of the phenomenal devotion shown by the French to the Virgin Mary. The national heroines celebrated were religious: Joan of Arc, Sainte Geneviève (the patron saint of Paris) and Sainte Clotilde (wife of Clovis). Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux died in 1897 and as early as 1899 her biography, *Histoire d'une âme*, became a bestseller. Consequently, convents welcomed more and more novices. Also, this is "le temps des basiliques", large churches built by the faithful for the faithful, as a sign of their beliefs. Notre-Dame de Fourvières (consecrated in 1896), the Sacré-Coeur in Montmartre (started in 1875) and the basilique du Rosaire in Lourdes (consecrated in 1901) are the main ones.

Moreover, some intellectuals chose to refuse the determinism and scientism preached by their counterparts. Amongst them the philosopher Bergson (1859-1941) who, in his *Creative Evolution* (1907) and *Matter and Memory* (1896) attempted to integrate the findings of biological science with a theory of consciousness. The novelist Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848-1907) became a convert in 1886 and wrote several books detailing his conversion. Paul Claudel (1868-1955)

also converted and became an ardent Catholic in 1886 after a Christmas mass at Notre-Dame de Paris moved him deeply. Religious poetry appeared with Paul Verlaine (1844-1896) and Germain Nouveau (1852-1920). Slightly later, after 1905, several leading lay writers joined the religious ranks and contributed to the defence of the Church at a time when it was particularly threatened: Francis Jammes (poet, 1868-1938), Charles Péguy (poet and playwright, 1873-1914) and Jacques Maritain (philosopher, 1882-1973). The religious poets and philosophers had only a limited influence on the French people; however the neo-traditionalist literature of Huysmans reached a large audience.

A number of artists also supported Catholicism, but religious paintings only represented a small part of the works accepted at the Salon. A study of the Salon catalogues between 1880 and 1910 shows how few paintings depicted religious subjects, even though this is only an approximation as the figures were calculated from a study of the titles of the paintings, and therefore some religious paintings without an obvious religious title may have escaped scrutiny (Fig. 6). However, because the figures are quite consistent over the 30-year period studied, one can assume that they probably are quite realistic. In 1880 and 1890, the total number of paintings depicting religious subjects is between 4 and 5%, and rises to just above 6% in 1900. Interestingly, in 1910, the number is sharply down at just over 2%, a drop which could be explained by the 1905 law of Separation which may have influenced the Salon jury. It is however very difficult to define how influenced the jury may have been by a state decision, as they had been independent from state control since 1881, when artists themselves took control of the exhibition[19]. But it

is possible that, the Salon having become more of a 'commercial' venture[20], the art works exhibited had to conform with the political trend if they were to sell. So in an atmosphere of anti-clericalism, the quasi-absence of religious subjects can be explained by the likely absence of buyers for them.

However, a study of the painters of religious subjects between 1870 and 1914 does show that several certainly were much admired by their contemporaries and sold their work, even in (and possibly because of) the difficult anti-clerical ambience. Joseph Aubert is one of them; according to Michael Paul Driskel in *Representing Belief*, the artist was "a devout Catholic and much-decorated academic painter with many religious projects to his credit"[21] and was commissioned in 1889 to decorate the Parisian Church of Saint-Nicolas-des-Champs with a series of murals, such as *La Cène*, executed in 1898. Another well-known figure was Maurice Denis, described as a "devout Catholic" by Driskel[22], who pictured inspirational, tranquil religious scenes such as *Le Mystère Catholique* (1889), *Le Calvaire ou Montée au Calvaire* (1889, Fig.7), or *Les Pélerins d'Emmaüs* (1895), to cite but a few. One can also look for Catholic paintings in the numerous representations of *pardons* in rural Britanny, such as the ones exhibited at the Quimper Museum: amongst them are *Arrivée du pardon de Sainte-Anne-de-Fouesnant à Concarneau* (1887) by Alfred Guillou and *Le Pardon de Kergoat* (1891) by Jules Breton (Figs. 8 and 9). Other late-nineteenth century religious paintings include that by 'naturalist' artists, representing scenes of the New Testament in particular sometimes mixed with modern elements. One such scene is *L'Arrivée des bergers* by Henri Lerolle, made in 1883 and presented at the Salon

(Fig. 10). Even though the Catholic newspaper *Le Correspondant* described it as "a naturalistic work, not Christian, but healthy and touching"[23], it does represent a scene of the Bible and therefore can be categorised as a religious painting. Moreover, when Lerolle painted a Crucifixion presented at the Salon of 1897, part of a commission for a Dominican monastery, he was described as a man who "lived in a state of intimacy with the Crucified One"[24] by Vallée, one of the monks of the order, showing that he certainly was a Catholic artist. Léon Lhermitte also produced a New Testament scene in the naturalistic manner with *L'Ami des Humbles* (Salon National des Beaux-Arts, 1892), which represents the Supper at Emmaus within a 19th-century village house, Christ being seated with two peasants from Northern France (Fig. 11).

This list of religious paintings is obviously non-exhaustive but it does prove that religious painting still had some public appeal between 1870 and 1914[25]. Whether in churches or at the Salon, in a classic or naturalistic manner, pictures from the Bible were still very much painted at a time when the Church and the State were at war. However, this thesis will show that paintings of cathedrals, despite their evident link with Catholicism were not necessarily religious representations. In fact, most of them probably were not intended to be read as religious paintings. It is of interest to note here that most of the representations of cathedrals produced between 1870 and 1914 show the exterior rather than the interior of cathedrals, as if the artists did not want to be seen as participating in the religious life of the cathedral, but preferred staying outside of it, as if going into the cathedral would have been considered too pious. It will thus be shown how

cathedrals could be used, manipulated even, by artists, to bear a message different from that intended by their builders. In the eyes of artists from different backgrounds, the religiosity of the cathedral might fade away and the monument become the bearer of new kinds of messages, very much in tune with the social and political issues which arose between 1870 and 1914. This thesis intends to show how the great cathedrals of France, as represented in the visual arts, stood for the beliefs of those who represented and used them, beliefs that themselves could be fixed, fluid, or ambiguous.

A number of questions arise from this statement. Why did artists choose to represent these intrinsically religious monuments at a time when religion was being contested on the one hand and renewing itself on the other? How can a Catholic artist use the representation of an old cathedral to promote faith in his time? On the other hand, why did many painters choose to paint cathedrals even though they were not religious? How can a Republican represent a church? And does it have to be in a negative way? How can a Republican find in a Gothic cathedral a subject supporting his political aspirations? Or were they purely interested in art, in the beauty of the subject? Why can we find many representations of Gothic cathedrals in paintings hung in secular public buildings such as *mairies*? Can these cathedrals be turned away from their primary aim (Catholicism) to become supporters of the republic? If so, how could this be done? To summarise, what do the representations of cathedrals tell us about the French conflict between state and church in the period that we are interested in (1870-1914)?

Cathedrals and anarchism

This second point takes us beyond the simple political/religious divide to enter the political sphere and some of its more extreme strands. Even though the cathedral is an intrinsically religious building, several politically committed artists whose views were on the side of the destruction of religion chose Gothic cathedrals as subject matter. It was the case for Pissarro (who painted Rouen cathedral) or Luce (Notre-Dame de Paris), whose commitment and active support to the anarchist movement, especially in the 1890s, was no secret. This will be developed in a chapter dedicated to the 'anarchist cathedral', exploring the reasons and the manner in which anarchist artists integrated a Christian monument into their paintings. Anarchism clearly states its opposition to religion, which Piotr Kropotkin, theoretician of anarchism, considered a "minorité dominatrice"; the "esprit théocratique" being an obstacle to the construction of an ideal society "qui cherche l'harmonie dans l'équilibre"[26]. However, the anarchists' interest in French cathedrals was situated in the cathedral being a symbol of communalism rather than religiosity. Indeed, the anarchists saw in the communes of the Middle Ages an example close to their ideal state, a communalism which expressed itself in the building of the great French cathedrals[27].

Luce and Pissarro painted entire series of cathedrals, and the chapter dedicated to anarchism will explore the various issues surrounding their work. What was their political agenda? How can it be seen in their cathedral paintings? How can a cathedral be the bearer of a political message, even though this message is far

removed from religion (as is the case with anarchism)? What devices did they use in the paintings to get their message through? In a word, how can a Catholic cathedral become an anarchist symbol?

Cathedrals and patriotism/nationalism

The theme of patriotism is particularly important to consider in the period that interests us. After the defeat against Prussia in 1870 and the ensuing treaty, France lost Alsace and much of Lorraine. From then on, a strong patriotic current supported by the Republican regime was aimed at *revanche* and the repossession of the two regions. Tombs notes in *France 1814-1914* that there was a "public 'cult of memory'" epitomised by war memorials and the black-veiled statue of Strasbourg on the Place de la Concorde, where annual ceremonies were held. Literature was produced which provided the French with fantasy revenge, especially in children's books: Paul Déroulède's poetry in particular, often distributed to schoolchildren at their prize-giving ceremonies, was of strong nationalist inspiration.[28] The titles of his collections of poems give an idea of their content: *Les Chants du Soldat* (1872), *Vive la France*[29] or *Chants patriotiques* (1882) to cite but a few[30]. A very well-known patriotic song, written by Gaston Villemer and Henri Nazet, *Vous n'aurez pas l'Alsace et la Lorraine* (1871)[31], also shows the strength and popularity of nationalist themes in popular culture.

Even though there never was any actual governmental policy about *revanche*[32], the Third Republic did ensure that its population was being readied for the fights to

come. The extension of primary education to all children in 1881-2 meant that the country was now training "a nation of republican soldier-citizens to serve France from childhood to middle age"[33]. On top of *instruction civique*, children were given compulsory gymnastics lessons (1880) and would participate in the *bataillons scolaires* where they would learn drill with rifles. Girls were not forgotten in this nationalist education and, according to Tombs, learnt to admire values such as courage and practised writing edifying letters to their brother in the army[34].

The *revanche* was a subject brought forward not only by politicians and writers, but also by artists. An example of this is the great number of works of art picturing Jeanne d'Arc as the heroine of the lost provinces and an icon of courage and warmongering, a secular figure symbolising the fight against the invaders (although she was also used by the Catholics in very much the same manner, with the addition of religion and monarchism attached to her person). The secular heroine is represented in numerous equestrian statues, such as the one made in 1874 by Emmanuel Fremiet on the Place des Pyramides in Paris, the one in front of Reims cathedral which bears the words "A Jeanne d'Arc – Reims-La France" on its plinth, or the one standing on the esplanade of Orléans cathedral bearing two scenes of war on low-relief on the plinth. Two pictorial representations of the young Lorraine include *Jeanne d'Arc à Reims lors du sacre du roi Charles VII* (1886-90) by Jules Lenepveu, which belongs to the nave of the Panthéon or the Catholic series of stained-glass windows made for the cathedral of Orléans in 1895, on which this thesis will have the opportunity to return (Fig. 12).

Other nationalist art works presented the French as valorous soldiers who should be looking forward to a future victory against the obvious enemy: Detaille's large canvas, *Le Rêve* (1888), depicted soldiers asleep dreaming of their victory to come in the soft light of dawn (Fig. 13). The painting was extremely popular and became well-known to a large public thanks to engravings representing it[35]. Louis Bernier, of the *Académie des Beaux-Arts*, saw in it a "scène symbolique, conseillère de vaillance et de vertu"[36] and wanted it to be displayed in barracks and schools. The nationalism of the painting even inspired a song around 1900, symbolising the dream of revenge[37].

But how can this theme of *revanche*, so essential to the Third Republic, be associated with the subject we are looking at, Gothic cathedrals? These can be associated with Republicanism and anarchism, as previously shown; but can they also support patriotic ideas? Can they even go further and become nationalist, can they call for war and the repossession of the lost provinces? How can a painting of a religious building support such an idea? What devices would have to be used by the artist?

This thesis will argue that Gothic cathedrals can indeed become a symbol of their country and be used as patriotic objects, and even possibly nationalist ones (it is the case for instance for a symbol such as Strasbourg cathedral, because of its association with the lost Alsace). The first chapter on *l'Année Terrible* will explain why these cathedrals could be utilised in such a way, and what purpose they served in the eye of the artist or writer who placed them in his work, for the literature

involving cathedrals with nationalism completes very well the ideas expressed in visual arts. It will be of particular interest to see how the official representation of cathedrals in schoolbooks sent a patriotic message to children, and how more general books such as dictionaries or encyclopaedias directed adults towards the same ideas. They will be put in parallel with the official guidelines on education in order to understand how much patriotism mattered and had to be taught to young children in particular. As a symbol of a glorious past, of a time of great builders and sculptors, cathedrals which represented *l'art français* (and not *l'art gothique*) took up an interesting place in the quest for a strong patriotic feeling amongst the French population. Through books, pictures and paintings representing Gothic cathedrals, this dissertation will show how the attention of the reader/viewer could be drawn towards a very specific political agenda, that of *revanche* against Germany.

Artistic research

Another theme this thesis will delve into is the development of new ideas in the world of art. 1874 marks the year of the first Impressionist exhibition, and a whole generation of young painters were keen on experimenting with new techniques. For various reasons, ranging from their pictorial interest to their financial potential, French Gothic cathedrals were used by several artists as a means to experiment with new techniques. This was the case for Monet, Suzanne Duchamp and Pierre Dumont in Rouen, and with Marquet and Matisse with Notre-Dame de Paris. They

did not represent the cathedrals as such, in a realistic manner, but in their own way, turning them into new visions in several very distinct styles. On their canvases cathedrals became new objects, open to a vast number of interpretations. This thesis will look at these specific paintings and study the possible ideas which can be drawn from the painter's technique and personal convictions in order to come to a conclusion regarding these particular cathedrals. What were the reasons behind the painters' choice of motif? Do the cathedrals remain in any way associated with religion? What ideas do the new techniques bring to the viewer? What can a cathedral become if it is used in a modern manner?

These sections on the modern approach towards cathedrals will show that the attraction towards Gothic cathedrals meant that artists felt free to go beyond the expected, the more 'naturalistic' representations to open up the medieval cathedrals to the modern world and manipulate them for the sake of art.

The aim of this thesis is to prove that beyond the obvious, the religious and the architectural prowess, French cathedrals present many facets, from becoming 'living' characters' under Monet's brush to representing political ideas and supporting several political tendencies. The following chapters will demonstrate that there is much more to Gothic cathedrals between 1870 and 1914 than one may think. Belonging to French culture and history, involved in public debates, used for praying, spreading political propaganda or as artistic objects, the cathedrals are in turn Catholic, Republican, anarchist, patriotic, alive and forward-looking.

The first chapter will explore the image of cathedrals at the beginning of the Third Republic, during the *Année Terrible*, and will demonstrate how the monuments were used in a nationalistic fashion. This theme will be taken further in Chapter Two, which is dedicated to the way cathedrals were taught to the young French generations between 1870 and the First World War. Chapter Three will explore the religious and spiritual cathedral, in order to show how Catholic artists gave their own interpretation of the monuments. Rouen cathedral will form a separate case study in Chapter Four permitting the exploration of a number of different visions, and is followed by a chapter about anarchism, for Rouen cathedral inspired Pissarro to depict a cathedral in an anarchist light. Finally, Notre-Dame de Paris will form the subject of the last chapter, in order to illustrate the evolution of the vision surrounding a single cathedral during several decades.

Research methods

My research methods throughout this PhD have taken several forms. Whilst some pictures could be studied on gallery walls (as was the case for instance with Monet's *Cathedrals* or some of the other famous works), others involved going into galleries' reserves. This was the case at Rouen's Musée des Beaux Arts and at the Musée Carnavalet, where many little-known pictures are kept. I was thus able to carefully analyse and photograph these works, and many of the interpretations given in this thesis are a direct result of these visits. Picture analysis was accompanied by thorough research on the artists and history of the period, mostly

carried out at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, whose archival funds also allowed the discovery of supporting pictorial material, mostly in the form of magazine and newspaper drawings. The Documentation at the Musée d'Orsay was also an essential source of information on individual artists. Thus this thesis touches not only on the pictures themselves and on their authors, but also on history, historiography and the history of taste. Literary material has also been used in order to put the images studied in context. This involved delving into novels, poetry, schoolbooks (which were researched in specialised libraries), dictionaries, newspaper articles and diaries contemporary to the cathedral representations I analysed. This thesis does not intend however to give a thorough account of the literature on cathedrals published between 1870 and 1914, as the literary sources mentioned have been mostly used to assist with the contextualisation of the pictorial documents[38]. This thesis does not consider the point of view of architectural history either.

I researched and used for this thesis a wide range of visual media: paintings (both Salon paintings by well-known artists and more 'independent' paintings sold through dealers), drawings, book illustrations, magazine illustrations, photographs from postcards (but not fine art photography) and even stained-glass windows. Thanks to these many sources, I was able to research two case studies (Rouen cathedral and Notre-Dame de Paris; Chapters Four and Six), as the very varied images gave many different views of one single cathedral.

Even though the number of cathedral representations mentioned in this thesis is high, it is important to point out that I have concentrated on Northern cathedrals

only. This is because Southern cathedrals do not seem to have been represented much between 1870 and 1914; only very few pictures of them may be found. The interest artists took for Northern cathedrals may be explained by their notoriety (they were considered the best examples of Gothic architecture), the fact that there already was a tradition of representing them, and maybe also, very simply, by the fact that many artists were based in the capital and that Notre-Dame de Paris, Rouen or Reims were quite easy to travel to. This thesis will therefore deal mainly with these cathedrals.

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[1] VAUCHEZ, A., "The Cathedral", in NORA, P., 1997, pp. 40, 45.
[2] EMERY, E., 2001, p. 57.
[3] Ibid., p. 61.
[4] Ibid., p. 127.
[5] Ibid., p. 130.
[6] ROUSSEAU, J.-J., *Lettre sur la musique française*, 1753.
[7] POMMERAYE, J.F., 1686.
[8] BÖHM, F.-J., 1743.
[9] Quoted in CHOLVY, G. and HILAIRE, Y.-M., 1986, p. 19, without a bibliographical source.
[10] VACHEROT, 1868.
[11] CHOLVY, G., 2001, p.167.
[12] MAYEUR, J.-M., 1973, p. 134.
[13] RÉMOND, R., 1999, pp. 184-5.
[14] One between 1879 and the mid-1880s, the second at the turn of the century, the culmination of which was the separation of church and state in 1905.
[15] MCMILLAN, J., "'Priest hits girl': on the front line in the 'war of the two Frances'", 2003, p.77.
[16] Quoted in CHOLVY, G. and HILAIRE, Y.-M., 1986, p. 20.
[17] CHOLVY, G. and HILAIRE, Y.-M., 1986, p. 22.
[18] BAUMONT, S., 1993, p. 291.
[19] MAINARDI, P., 1993, p. 84.
[20] MAINARDI, P., 1993, p. 85.
[21] DRISKEL, M.P., 1992, p. 213.
[22] DRISKEL, M.P., 1992, p. 237.
[23] DRISKEL, M.P., 1992, p. 210.
[24] DRISKEL, M.P., 1992, p.211.
[25] For a different argument, see THOMSON, R., *The Troubled Republic*, Newhaven and London, 2004, chapt. 3.
[26] KROPOTKINE, P., 1896, p. 18.
[27] Ibid.
[28] TOMBS, R., 1996, pp. 51-52.
[29] A cantata put to music by Gounod, 1880.

[30] The following extract comes from "Aux femmes de France", published in the *Chants Patriotiques* in 1882, p.115:
Femme, si l'être en qui tu mets ton espérance,
Ne met son espérance et son bonheur qu'en toi,
Si, Français, il peut vivre étranger à la France,
Ne connaissant partout que son amour pour loi;
Si, sans te croire indigne et sans se croire infâme,
Quand tout son pays s'arme, il n'accourt pas s'armer,

O femme, ta tendresse a déformé cette âme,
S'il ne sait pas mourir, tu ne sais pas aimer!

[31] Chorus: "Vous n'aurez pas l'Alsace et la Lorraine,/Et, malgré vous, nous resterons Français./Vous avez pu germaniser la plaine,/Mais notre coeur vous ne l'aurez jamais." (*Marches militaires Françaises*, Artistes Français Associés, music by Ben Tayoux). There are many other example of songs with 'revanche' as their main theme. One can cite for instance *Le Régiment de Sambre et Meuse* (1879, music by Robert Planquette), whose chorus is the following: Le régiment de Sambre et Meuse/Marchait toujours au cri de Liberté/Cherchant la route glorieuse/Qui l'a conduit à l'immortalité. (Ref: *Chants patriotiques et Cocardiers*, 1963). Another one, *Marche lorraine*, written by Jules Jouy and Octave Pradel, music by Louis Ganne (1895) celebrates the heritage of Jeanne d'Arc with this chorus: Fiers enfants de la Lorraine/Des montagnes à la plaine/Sur nous plane, ombre sereine/Jeanne d'Arc, vierge souveraine!/Vieux gaulois à tête ronde/Nous bravons tous à la ronde/Si là-bas l'orage gronde/C'est nous qui gardons l'accès/du sol Français! (*Chants Patriotiques (deuxième série)*, Encyclopédie Sonore).

[32] TOMBS, R., 1996, p. 52.
[33] TOMBS, R., 1996, p. 53.
[34] TOMBS, R., 1996, p. 53.
[35]BERNIER, L., 1913.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Lyrics by Armand Foucher, music by Charles Helmer and Georges Krier. Chorus: Les voyez-vous,/Les hussards, les dragons, l'Armée,/Ils mourront tous/Pour la nouvelle épopée./Fiers enfants/De la race/Sonnez aux champs/Le rêve passe.
Ref: Nos plus belles chansons, vol 1, 1890-1905 [*Le Rêve passe*, Bérard, 1905], Marianne Mélodie, 1999.
[38] For thorough analysis of the literature on cathedrals, see Le Men and Emery's publications.

Chapter One
The Cathedral and the Republic: ideology and imagery

Nous [les Français] vous aimions quand vous étiez tristes,
et dans cette longue période que l'on peut dire mystique où,
réfugiés dans l'ombre de votre cathédrale,
vous continuiez de voir avec les yeux de l'esprit
la campagne autour de Metz trempée du sang le plus injustement récompensé,
et la route de France couverte, aussi loin que l'oeil peut aller,
par l'exode de vos concitoyens.[1]
Maurice Barrès, 1911.

This first chapter will explore the image of the cathedral as used in Republican and nationalist contexts, a theme which occurs time and again in many cathedral representations between 1870 and 1914. Covering the period from the war images produced in 1870-1 to the post-Separation and the nationalism of Maurice Barrès (just before World War I), this chapter discusses how French cathedrals became the subject of various pictorial representations engaging with debates about the Republic and the motherland. This chapter will take several paintings and illustrations in order to examine them as case studies. These will range from well-known paintings by major artists to magazine illustrations, which will make it possible to discuss a wide spectrum of visual representations, aimed at different audiences. The paintings may have been seen only by a bourgeois élite, but the illustrations made for periodicals would probably have had quite a readership as they were produced for major publications such as *Le Monde illustré* or *L'Illustration*. The images dealt with here would therefore no doubt have had an influence on the French who saw them. This chapter will start with an analysis of various cathedral illustrations made in the context of the Franco-Prussian War and the Siege of Paris. These will show how the cathedrals could stand as symbols for the courage and pride of the nation during difficult times, and how they encouraged the French people to look beyond their

miseries. Second, a section will be dedicated to the cathedral as 'state' art; in other words this will explore the various representations of cathedrals to be found in public buildings such as *mairies*. This necessitates an assessment of an apparent paradox: the use of a Christian building in one of the most secular of places. Why and how did the Republic appropriate such a building to serve lay purposes? Finally, another aspect of art related to the state will be explored in the form of Barrès's patriotism. The author wrote *Colette Baudoche* in 1909, a short novel in which Metz Cathedral plays an important part. Not only will this chapter explore Barrès's textual construction of the cathedral as a patriotic symbol, but it will also analyze illustrations accompanying it, which reinforce the strong message of the novel. So this chapter will present a view of the various debates at stake in France at the time, such as *revanche*, various responses to nationalism, and the new ideals of the Republic versus images of traditional religious cathedrals.

Overall, this chapter aims at purveying a partial but focused analysis of the image of the French cathedral in the Republican context. The case-studies cited above will permit analysis of the various angles of interpretation in this complex area, for we will be delving into patriotic and nationalistic, as well as more 'moderate' republican views. This chapter will take a chronological approach, in order to understand how republican and nationalistic tendencies developed between 1870 and 1914.

Notre-Dame and 'L'Année Terrible'

The historical context

The beginning of this research and analysis of the representation of cathedrals starts with a major event in French politics, which would have repercussions on the French people, their mentalities and the way they were educated until time came for *revanche* in 1914. The war against Prussia was declared by Napoleon III on 19 July 1870, after a dispute over the vacancy of the Spanish throne and the subsequent heightened pressure put on the king of Prussia by France so he would forbid any candidature from a Prussian prince. The French were extremely confident that their army was superior to Prussia's and that the Southern German states, as well as Austria, would support them. However, Germany united behind Prussia and Austria remained neutral. The first August battles proved the French wrong about their military strength. On 2 September, at Sedan, an entire army was defeated and the emperor made prisoner. When the news reached the capital, the Parisians rose and proclaimed France a republic at the Hôtel de Ville, and gave the presidency to Adolphe Thiers. However, the defeat at Sedan and the proclamation of the Republic did not end the war. Bismarck "intended to guarantee future security by thoroughly defeating and weakening France", whom he considered "aggressive, arrogant and untrustworthy"[2]. In order to prevent any further attacks, he demanded in exchange for peace that Alsace and part of Lorraine be annexed to Prussia. This offer was of course unacceptable to the new French government, and they therefore carried on with the fighting. Paris was besieged for several months from 15 September 1870, at the mercy of hunger, cold and shelling. It was only when the capital almost ran out of

food that they finally surrendered on 28 January 1871. General elections on 8 February saw the parties in favour of peace win a majority at the Assemblée Nationale. They in turn elected Adolphe Thiers chief of the executive, and he and Pierre Favre negociated a peace with Bismarck. Paris, however, had not voted in favour of peace, but elected a left-wing, pro-war contingent. Many Parisians considered the peace treaty, which included the cession of Alsace and much of Lorraine, as well as an indemnity of 5 billion francs and a German parade down the Champs-Elysées, a betrayal. Angry at the prospect of German troops entering Paris, and the possibility that armed hostilities might start again, National Guards, who were anti-German as well as republican, seized weapons. "They saw the peace as both unpatriotic and reactionary", notes Tombs[3]. They believed that the newly-elected royalists were to restore a monarchy, with the help of the Prussians. Demonstrations and attacks on the police became common in the capital; the government, which had left only very few armed troops in Paris, was powerless. So Thiers sent troops to the capital in order to recapture the several hundred cannons seized by the National Guard. On 18 March, crowds of civilians, including women and children, blocked the path of the governmental troops. Many soldiers fraternised with the crowds, while the insurgents shot a general and a former commander of the National Guard. These events caused the army command and the government to panic and flee to Versailles. The National Guard Federation organised a vote which led to the election of an extreme-left Parisian government: the Commune. They wanted the 'Free City of Paris' to become a model republic run by its people. Their dream was however short-lived. On 21 May, after a five-week siege, government troops entered the capital: the 'Semaine Sanglante' had started. Between 21 and 28

May, the Commune was crushed, between 20,000-25,000 people were killed and many Parisian buildings burnt down. In the words of Robert Tombs, it was "the worst civil bloodshed in Europe between the 1790s and the 1940s"[4].

Because these events were of far-reaching national significance, involving such disturbing changes as the loss of the Alsace and part of Lorraine, as well as the rebellion of the Parisians, artists had their own say about the events they witnessed[5]. It seems however that "la plupart des artistes de tous bords ont fermé les yeux sur les évènements"[6]; only very few immediately represented in their work what they and the French people experienced during the conflict (this view has recently been disputed by Hollis Clayson[7]). Claude Monet and Camille Pissarro for instance left the country and found refuge in Britain. But some, especially those staying in Paris during the Prussian siege and the Commune, reflected in a number of paintings, drawings and etchings the events they witnessed first-hand. Gustave Courbet for instance was a Communard who was arrested for his taking part in the government of the Commune. He left a drawing from his prison stay, and another one depicting the violence of the events (1871; Figs. 14 and 15). Edouard Manet stayed in Paris during the siege, entered the *corps des canonniers* and then became member of the *Etat-major* of the National Guard, as a lieutenant[8]. He represented several scenes showing the misery of the Parisian people, queuing for food (*Queue à la Boucherie*, etching, 1870, Art Gallery and Museum, Kelvingrove, Glasgow[9]) or being shot dead at a barricade (*La Barricade*, 1871, Kunsthalle, Hamburg[10]). He also made a lithograph entitled *Guerre Civile* (1871; Fig. 16) depicting a dead man lying on a street, and expressed the depressing mood of the capital in the cold in a painting he entitled *Snow at Montrouge* (1870, Cardiff, National Museum of Wales[11]). Another artist

who took on the subject of the war was Ernest Meissonier in *Le Siège de Paris* (1870-1884), a picture reconciling the realism of the violence and an allegory of Paris, and in *Les ruines du palais des Tuileries* (1871-1883), another painting with a double meaning expressing both his pain at the destruction of one of Paris' symbols and the hope that in spite of the Communards the glorious past can still guide the future generations (Figs. 17 and 18). This picture of the Tuileries is of particular interest because it represents the ruins of a building charged with significance. Built in 1564, it was briefly the residence of Louis XVI before being used by Napoléon I, then by Louis XVIII and Louis-Philippe, before being the residence of Napoléon III. In Meissonier's painting, the ruined palace can represent the continuation of Bonapartist tradition, with the Arc du Carrousel standing proud and untouched in the background. But it can also be seen as a glorification of the French army, with the names of famous battles engraved in the stones scattered in the foreground. But whether this painting is about Bonapartism or the French army, the eventual message appears to be one of continuity. The values of strong rulers, whoever they may be, continue throughout the ages and through destruction. The Tuileries therefore carry a strong message in this representation, and possibly one similar to that which we will find again in Victor Dargaud's painting of the reconstruction of the Paris Hotel de Ville (Fig. 33). The destruction of the Tuileries was also the subject of an oil painting by Georges Clairin: *L'Incendie des Tuileries* (1871, Fig. 19). In this rather impressionist depiction, the artist mixes smoke, clouds, scattered debris, torn flags and dead bodies lying on the street. Maximilien Luce also chose to represent the Commune in *Une rue de Paris en mai 1871,* ou *La Commune* (painted in 1903-1905)[12], a painting based on his personal recollection of the events (Fig. 20). Luce

was only 13 year old in 1871, but kept a vivid memory of the violent fights; which "il exorcise dans cette grande toile, dont les teintes lumineuses, inondant de clarté une rue désertée de Paris un jour de printemps, rendent plus pathétique encore la vision cruelle des corps qui jonchent le sol"[13]. Gustave Doré made a series of drawings on the subject of the conflict too. The later section dedicated to Doré will delve into a work representing a cathedral, but *L'Enigme. Souvenir de la guerre de 1870* (painted in 1871, Fig. 21), representing a winged female figure crying in front of a city in flames, an *Album de vingt-six dessins sur le siège de Paris* (1870-71), or *Scène du bombardement de Paris* (1870-71) are a few of the works which deal directly with the conflict.

The Tuileries were thus used by artists as a symbol for the sufferings of Paris, but what about other great monuments such as Notre-Dame, or the cathedral of Strasbourg, as a symbol of the loss of Alsace? Was the cathedral of Paris, or any other, used as a tool for artists to express their feelings about the 'Année Terrible'? Several case studies will allow us to explore these issues in details. The first section of this chapter will focus on several drawings of Notre-Dame published in various papers and magazines representing the cathedral during the bombing of the capital by the Prussians and then during the Commune, before an analysis of two paintings also directly related to the Prussian siege of Paris and showing Notre-Dame: Puvis de Chavannes's *Le Pigeon* (1871) and Jules Didier and Jacques Guiaud's *Les Pigeons messagers, novembre 1870* (Figs. 31 and 32). Victor Dargaud's painting *L'Hôtel de Ville, en reconstruction* (1880), even though relating to an episode of the history of the Paris city hall, also features Notre-Dame in a position which can be interpreted in different ways (Fig. 33). Finally, several magazine drawings, as well as Gustave

Doré's *La France protège ses enfants* (1871), present cathedrals of the lost provinces, particularly Strasbourg, in a particularly patriotic manner (Fig. 40).

War is a social issue, and the cathedral, through its connection to religion, also relates to a major social issue. Artists were interested in representing war because of the way it impacted on their and their fellow citizens's lives. This chapter will show how they used cathedrals in conjunction with war, which is rather a new idea. Cathedrals were not often represented in scenes of conflict in the past; battle scenes usually had no buildings in them, as they occurred in the country and not in cities. But in the 19th century this changed as the war moved into the city and closer to the people. Illustrators reflected this in their work: they were present at the scene of battles and then informed a large public through their work, especially in magazines as will be shown below. Cathedrals are obviously part of cities and they find themselves drawn into war representations on many occasions as far as the 1870-71 conflict is concerned. The conjunction of a building representing religion and peace with scenes of war and destruction raises a number of issues: what does a cathedral stand for in a war cityscape; what does the paradox cathedral/battle bring to the picture and therefore to the viewer? How does an artist convey the idea of nationalism through a cathedral? The following sections want to answer these questions and give these 'cathedrals at war' their true meaning within the context in which they were executed.

Notre-Dame in battle; the siege of Paris

The history of Notre-Dame during the conflict proves to be rather discreet. The monument was not the centre point of any battle, nor – in the event - did it go up in flames like the Tuileries when the Communards defended themselves. Notre-Dame however appears in several depictions of the Siege and Commune, and can be argued as standing either as a suffering character or as a monument to the grandeur and courage of a martyred country. This section analyses how Notre-Dame was depicted during the Siege and the Commune, and explains how it carried messages relevant not only to the Parisians but also to the country as a whole.

Interestingly, the number of illustrations and paintings depicting Notre-Dame during the 1870-71 conflict is rather low. Only a handful of artists chose to represent the Paris cathedral; most of the illustrations of the events show the soldiers, the fortifications, the enemy lines or the effects of rationing. This can probably be explained by the fact that these concerns were much more relevant to the everyday life of the besieged Parisians than their unscathed cathedral. Had it been damaged in the conflict, one would imagine that it would have become a 'war' subject like the other ruins, but standing as it was, there were certainly other, more relevant subjects for artists to focus on.

However, a study of newspapers and magazines dating from the siege reveals that Notre-Dame did appear in several issues, and that the position of the Paris cathedral during this period seems to have been that of a symbol more than that of a monument embroiled in battle (and this because it was not damaged). Yet a drawing by Daniel

Vierge entitled *Les obus prussiens tombant autour de Notre-Dame*[14] depicts Notre-Dame in a scene of chaos during a night bombing of the capital (Fig. 22). In this illustration, showing a quay, the Seine, a bridge and Notre-Dame in the background, a shell has just exploded on the quay in the foreground. Several people who were walking there have been blown away or are falling to the ground. A child on the pavement looks dead, other figures are trying to protect themselves, a woman is lying, her head in her hands. A man in the foreground is crawling whilst another in the background is fleeing the scene. The presence of Notre-Dame is obvious against a star-studded sky. The path of two of the shells are clearly visible right in front of the cathedral, one of them leading to the bridge, the other into the water. Notre-Dame is very much part of this war scene. Even though it remains unscathed, it becomes involved in the events through its imposing presence and the shells' paths attracting the viewer's eye to the silhouette of the monument. The idea of a human tragedy (the figures are placed in the foreground and very detailed) is the central theme of this drawing. The expression on the face of a dying man is visible, and a general feeling of utter distress prevails, emphasised by the belongings scattered on the pavement. Notre-Dame reminds us that this scene is happening in Paris, a historic and superb city which produced monuments such as its cathedral, but it is also there to emphasise that the calm of the starry night has been broken by the bombing. The large and dark silhouette of the cathedral, as well as the stars and the moon crescent above it, all carry an idea of stability and tranquillity, yet they are disturbed by the shells crossing the cityscape. What should be a beautiful night turned into a nightmarish vision, and Notre-Dame, in spite of its imposing presence, can do no more than become a sad witness of the carnage. The interpretation can go even

further, and it is possible to see the dark mass of the cathedral, watching over the scene, as a sign that nothing can be done to stop the attacks and save the capital from the Prussians. Notre-Dame, a symbol for Paris which has stood for centuries, is now in peril like everything else. This tremendously hopeless night scene certainly evokes through the presence of the cathedral the feelings that most Parisians must have had, a sombre presage which was going to be proved correct.

Notre-Dame symbol of suffering and pride

Beside this representation as a suffering figure, Notre-Dame can also be found in other documents from the siege in which, as well as exalting the sufferings of Paris, it also elevates the capital and therefore its people to a high level of pride.

Such a document can be found in an allegory by the caricaturist Cham from *Le Monde illustré* published on 26 November 1870 (Fig. 23). Above the caption "L'histoire de 1870.-Héroïque Paris! Je te réserve une belle page", a woman symbolising History kneels by a stele inscribed "L'Histoire 1870", ready to write about the historical events of the year. In the middle ground, another female figure stands, this time symbolising Paris and the resistance: she has a fierce pose, is looking towards an invisible enemy and holds a gun in one hand whilst the other is resting on a cannon. Beside and behind her can be seen the heroic defenders of the capital in their uniforms, their gaze also directed outwards towards the attackers. Finally, all this scene is taking place in front of Notre-Dame, whose towers and spire are clearly recognizable in the background. The cathedral is obviously a way for the artist to make the viewer identify the city of Paris, but beyond this it is also a symbol

of resistance and pride. Importantly, Paris is not shown suffering but resisting and proud. The unscathed cathedral and the fact that it is a monument symbolising the greatness of France adds to the idea of pride already displayed by the various figures and expressed in the caption. Even more, the presence of Notre-Dame may also be seen as the very reason why the Parisians should carry on fighting. Proud of their past, proud of their nation, they simply cannot let the Prussians take this pride away. So this picture illustrates in a very clear manner the strong patriotism of the French in general and the Parisians in particular: they have to fight and be victorious because they are a proud people who, like the cathedral, stand under the shells.

Another drawing of Notre-Dame during the siege can be found in *L'Illustration* of 4 February 1871 (Fig. 24). Even though it was published a few days after the siege had ended in a defeat, this illustration – a descriptive image in contrast to Cham's allegory - wants to show once again how courageous and determined the Parisians were. In the snow, in front of the Hôtel-de-Ville, a large number of soldiers gather around the last cannons offered by contribution to the government. A small crowd of civilians is also present, cheering. In the background, the silhouette of Notre-Dame is easily visible and, like the town hall, stands proud amongst the crowd. This idea of pride is carried by the general order prevailing in this picture. The soldiers are marching in neat parallel rows horizontally, while vertical parallel lines are created thanks to the verticality of the buildings, the lamp posts and the naked trees. Notre-Dame is part of this architectural and pictorial order, with its spire and towers adding to the parallel lines already present. But even though the whole illustration seems to be reflecting calm and order, the idea of disorder has been included: The group of civilians on the left-hand side is disorderly whilst the snow falling on the scene (it is

particularly obvious on the right hand-side in front of the cathedral) from a dark sky lets the viewer suppose that things may not be as cheerful as they seem. Indeed, at the time the event took place, probably a few days before the end of the siege[15], the Parisian mood must have been rather sombre. Starved and unable to repel the Prussians, they certainly finally realised that nothing could be done any more. So even though it depicts soldiers and cannons ready for battle, this illustration also conveys the sad truth. The cathedral witnesses the scene, but its mood is certainly dark. The shade chosen for the cathedral conveys an idea of sadness, the snow flakes, pushed by the cold winter wind, as well as the dark clouds hanging over the monument, add even more to it. There is no hope, and Notre-Dame does not appear to alleviate this.

Finally, another drawing from *Le Monde illustré* (17 December 1870, Fig. 25) depicts Notre-Dame in a siege setting; this time the monument is used as a background for a scene representing the wounded Parisians soldiers being brought back to the centre of Paris on *bateaux-mouches*. But even though this could be a bleak scene of death and suffering, the composition and tones used by the artist suggest otherwise. Firstly, the casualties are actually hardly visible, only a few stretchers can be seen being carried away on the bank, on the left-hand side. Secondly, even though the left-hand side of the picture is dark, the rest is light. The houses on the quay appear to be basking in the sunshine, and the Seine (except in the foreground) reflects the light too. Also, the sky does still show a few clouds hanging over the capital but is otherwise clearing, as the bright horizon indicates. The silhouette of Notre-Dame detaches itself on this clear sky, and even though the monument is dark and therefore possibly the sign of a gloomy day, the very fact that

the sky just behind it is clearing can be interpreted as a symbol of hope. So the dark foreground and cathedral may only be there to show that the future will be brighter. Notre-Dame can be seen as the standing pride of a capital which will not give up and whose future can only improve.

However the city finally surrendered on 28 January 1871, Notre-Dame still unscathed. But the history of the cathedral for that period of conflict was not over yet. As a great Parisian symbol, it was to get its share of trouble during the Commune.

Notre-Dame and the Commune

The iconography showing Paris cathedral during the Commune is again very scarce. Painters and artists in general have focused on the ruins (Meissonier and the Tuileries for instance, and the magazines and papers of the time are filled with depictions of the ruined streets), the sufferings of the people (Manet and Luce depicted the dead lying on the streets) and the Communards rather than on a monument which survived the bloody street fightings. Notre-Dame does however appear on a drawing published by *Le Monde illustré* dated 1st April 1871 (Fig. 26). In this illustration, the dark silhouette of Notre-Dame works as the background for a chaotic scene of upturned cobblestones, cannons and soldiers in arms occupying the square in front of the Hôtel-de-Ville. This impression of chaos is further enhanced by the dark clouds (which could be smoke from burning buildings) hanging over the houses on the right-hand side. The sombre mood is reflected not only in the soldiers and the cannons, but also in the greyness of the two main buildings represented here.

The recognizable silhouette of the town hall is grey and imposing, while Notre-Dame is actually nearly completely black, its colour echoing that of the cannons on the foreground (left-hand side), the rubble in the middle of the square and the group of soldiers on the right, further back. The eye is therefore drawn from these dark elements to the background where the cathedral stands next to dark clouds too. There is therefore an apparent association between the monument and the events happening in the foreground. Notre-Dame is not only a witness of the bloodshed, but also an intrinsic part of it. It stands guard, planted in the background, but also seems to commiserate with the fate of Paris. The choice made by the artist to draw the cathedral in black rather than grey makes it an obvious participant in the scene. And even though it is not itself burning, physically suffering from the civil war, it is involved, appears to express its sadness and mourn the dead Parisians.

In order to understand fully why Notre-Dame can be considered an actor in the events, it is important at this point to focus on the fate of Notre-Dame during the Commune. Consultation of newspapers of the period reveals that the monument was used by the Communards and was also the target of their attacks against churches in general. Even more, though Notre-Dame was not destroyed at the end of the Commune; it was however supposed to be burnt down by a fire the Communards had lit inside the building.

L'Univers, a Catholic paper, describes in its 22 May 1871 edition how the cathedral was used for military purposes by the Commune: "Hier, vendredi, à une heure de l'après-midi, toute l'artillerie qui n'était pas au feu, a été réunie dans l'église Notre-Dame qui, désormais, servira à cet effet."[16] This was not however the first instance of a desecration of the religious building by the government of the

Commune. On 9 April 1871, *L'Univers* announced the plunder of its treasure-house: "La rapacité de la Commune vient de s'abattre sur Notre-Dame. Le Trésor a été pillé."[17] They do however correct this news the following day after learning that the precious objects have been returned to the cathedral: "On nous a dit depuis que les agents de la Commune, après avoir chargé leur butin dans deux voitures, l'ont restitué à l'église."[18] On 20 April, the same paper published a list of the Parisian churches which were closed to worship between 1 and 18 April; Notre-Dame was amongst them.

But the major event was the arson of the cathedral, which took place on 24 May 1871, during the *Semaine Sanglante*. Several sources corroborate the existence of this little-known event. An account of the events written as early as 1871 by Lucien Le Chevalier recalls in details the fate of Paris cathedral on that day. The author states that his sources come from a physician who worked at the nearby Hôtel-Dieu that very night. The doctor witnessed a group of Communards escorting two tons of petrol and requisitioning buckets from the hospital in order to spread the liquid. At eleven the next morning, a workman noticed smoke coming out of Notre-Dame and raised the alarm at the Hôtel-Dieu. A group of medical staff, as well as local people, approached the building and managed to obtain the keys to enter it, even though the bell ringer and the beadle had been threatened by the arsonists. The atmosphere in the building was "épaisse et brûlante, chargée de vapeurs de pétrole"[19]. After ten minutes, people were about to give up before the immensity of the task when a fireman appeared and accepted to help, even though this was forbidden by the Commune. Inside the cathedral, three pyres had been set on fire; one "à la hauteur du choeur", another "à la hauteur du maître-autel" and a last one "à la hauteur de la

chaire"[20]. Yet another one was supposed to go up in flames but had not yet, probably because the arsonists had run out of petrol. The people present at the scene managed to extinguish all the fires, and then organised a guard duty aimed at protecting the building against any other attack until the Versaillais army secured the area the following night. But as well as an account of the salvage of the monument, Le Chevalier's text is also an attack against the anti-clericalism of the Communards. The author mentions that the unlit pyre had been set "autour d'un grand Christ et d'une statue de la Vierge, amenés là tout exprès"[21], and that "tous les troncs avaient été brisés, les tabernacles, les reliquaires défoncés et pillés, le lutrin de bronze brisé", "les livres saints (...) sont en partie brûlés"[22]. So, even though "la magnifique basilique était définitivement sauvée", the author of this historical account condemns in strong terms the "barbares"[23] who very nearly destroyed Paris cathedral.

This event was also reported by the newspapers, notably by *Le Français* and *L'Univers*. The latter reports on 28 May 1871 that *Le Français* wrote: "A Notre-Dame, les insurgés avaient massé les chaises et les avaient imprégnées de pétrole pour y mettre le feu. Grâce à la rapidité de nos mouvements et aux précautions du génie, les désastres ont pu être évités."[24] *Le Français* also writes on 4 June that "la cathédrale de Paris a été bouleversée par les monstres du 18 mars" and that it will have to be tidied up for the funeral of Mgr Darbois, assassinated by the Communards.

Finally, this section ends with another depiction of Notre-Dame which puts it in the context of the fires raging through the capital. This picture does not show the burning of the cathedral, but places the monument in a scene of horror, amidst the

black smoke swirling in the Parisian sky. Published in *Le Monde illustré* on 7 October 1871, this large drawing by François Chifflart, a well-known illustrator (his work on the novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* will be shown in Chapter Six), occupies a double page and wants to remind the nation of the horrors of 'les nuits de mai' (Fig. 27). On the left-hand side, the silhouette of the burning Tuileries is easily recognisable, while on the right an immense swirl of black smoke towers above the Cour des Comptes. The middle of the drawing is occupied by the Seine whose waters reflect the light of the fires. The size of the smoke-invaded sky (it occupies half the picture), as well as the contrast between the lighter tones (both on the water and in the sky above it) and the general darkness prevailing on the rest of the picture provides the viewer with a hellish impression: one can only just see what is happening and guess the horror of the scene. However, very near the centre of the picture, Notre-Dame acts as a focal point: the eye is drawn along the river to its position on a sky cleared from the invasive smoke. The smoke itself, twirling above the city, appears to make a visual allusion to angels: there could be a white winged figure on the left (the angel of good?) facing a darker figure on the right (the angel of evil?). This is a hypothesis, but Chifflart is known for his visionary work and such indefinite figures may well have been drawn on purpose, adding even more pathos to the scene of destruction. But even though the main part of this drawing deals with the horrors of the fires, the very position of Notre-Dame, near the middle of the composition certainly indicates hope. And of course one has to remember that this drawing was executed a few months after the events, so Chifflart knew that the end of the conflict was near. Here he certainly wants to remind the viewers of the terrible fate of Paris during the Semaine Sanglante and bring a strong element of fear into

them. But because he can stand back the quiet silhouette of the cathedral provides the peaceful, hopeful symbol of a better future.

Notre-Dame and the pigeons

The crucial importance of the carrier pigeons

It is particularly interesting to see that two of the few paintings research uncovered dealing with the subject of cathedrals and *l'année terrible* represent the same topic: that of the carrier pigeons, which, with hot-air balloons, were the only link between Paris and the outside world during the winter siege. Before analyzing the paintings representing Notre-Dame within the context of the siege and the carrier pigeons, it is important to point out the importance these birds took in the Parisians' everyday life under siege. The capital was under siege from 15 September 1870 until the end of January 1871. A number of autobiographical accounts describe the harshness of life through these winter months, and a few marking pages from the journalist Francisque Sarcey's *Le Siège de Paris* recreate these conditions (Appendix 2). The painter Manet also left a diary of the siege in the form of the numerous letters he sent to his wife, who was then taking refuge in the south of France (Appendix 3). To him and other Parisians in his situation, the lifeline created by the pigeon post was of a major importance, as shown in Manet's letter to his wife from 12 January 1871: "j'espérais avoir de vos nouvelles, car il est arrivé ces jours-ci un pigeon porteur de dépêches, mais malheureusement je n'ai [rien] et c'est le seul plaisir que j'aurais en ce moment."[25] For imprisoned Parisians like Manet, the carrier pigeons bringing war news from the rest of France as well as family letters were of an

extreme importance. Jules Claretie (1840-1913), an author and literary critic who was to be elected to the *Académie Française* in 1888, also gave his personal thoughts on the pigeons during the siege in his journal, deploring on 14 December 1870 that he did not receive any news from the outside ("point de nouvelles! pas un pigeon!"[26]) and reporting the words Louis Blanc said to him on the previous day: "Je voudrais (...) qu'on mît sur les armes de la ville de Paris un pigeon, ce messager de civilisation, cet oiseau de paix qui relie l'assiégé à la France, si différent de cet oiseau de proie sinistre et lâche, l'aigle!"[27].

Another faithful correspondent was Émile Lehideux, a Parisian banker aged 37 in 1870, who wrote to his wife on a near-daily basis during the siege. His letters provide a valuable source of information on the way carrier pigeons were considered by the besieged. On 15 November 1870 for instance, he could not hide his joy at receiving a note from his wife and his heart went out to the pigeon who brought it: "Je suis encore tout à la joie de la dépêche que j'ai reçue hier. J'en parle à tout le monde autant du reste pour faire partager ma joie que pour dire que par tel ou tel moyen il y a des chances pour avoir sa part de la manne céleste. Que je voudrais connaître le pigeon qui a apporté ce message. Je lui promettrais la vie la plus douce et la plus agrémentée de colombes qu'un pigeon puisse rêver."[28] A few days later, another letter praised the birds again: "les nouvelles des familles qui sont en province commencent à arriver à Paris; les pigeons rendent bien la main dans ce moment-ci et il est arrivé depuis quatre jours plus de mille dépêches."[29] Another husband mentioning the importance of the carrier pigeons in his letters to his beloved wife was Victor Desplats, 51, a teacher at the École de médecine who sent his family to

Boulogne. In the letter dated 22 November, he felt lonely and disappointed not to receive anything through the fragile link with the outside world: "je n'ai pas encore reçu ta lettre-dépêche que j'attends tous les jours avec la plus vive impatience. Jusqu'à ce jour, il n'est arrivé que quatre pigeons et encore l'un d'eux a perdu son petit papier précieux en route (...)."[30] On 11 January, Desplats mentioned how the population of Paris was generally affected by the lack of news: "Lundi, un pigeon voyageur a apporté des nouvelles de la province pour le gouvernement et des dépêches privées. Il y avait au moins trois semaines que nous ne savions rien de ce qui se passait hors de notre cercle, ce qui jetait un peu de découragement dans la population."[31] And when he finally received a note from his wife, the joy was so immense he said a blessing for the pigeon at the origin of his happiness:

Chère amie,
Enfin, je l'ai reçue cette dépêche si impatiemment attendue! Je l'ai ouverte en tremblant de tous mes membres. *Enfants malades*, mes yeux se sont troublés. *Sont bien maintenant*, mon coeur s'est dégonflé et un large soupir de joie s'est échappé de ma poitrine. Enfin, vous êtes tous vivants. Je sais où vous êtes, je vous retrouverai donc encore, ah! jamais nouvelle ne m'a été plus agréable. Qu'il soit béni ce pigeon qui a bien voulu l'apporter. Je suis heureux, plein de joie.[32]

The personal experiences described in the letters above find an echo in the newspapers published in the capital during the siege. It is not possible to mention them here for lack of space, but Appendix 4 gathers some of the most significant newspaper cuttings about the importance of the pigeons during the Siege. Also, Figure 28 shows the front page of *Le Monde illustré* of 29 October 1870, on which the interior of a dovecot is represented, thus underlining the significant value placed on the carrier pigeons.

This summary of the way in which the pigeons were seen both by individuals and by the newspapers of the siege revealed the enormous importance attached to the

carrier pigeons by the imprisoned population, waiting day after day for a short note which would reassure them about the fate of their relatives. The pigeons appear to have been a constant source of worry for the Parisians, therefore it is no wonder that two major paintings about the siege chose to focus on the subject. The two artists, Pierre Puvis de Chavannes and Jules Didier dealt however with a similar subject in very different ways.

The paintings

Pierre Puvis de Chavannes

Puvis de Chavannes (1824-1898), known for his decoration of the Panthéon, the Sorbonne and the reconstructed Hôtel de Ville de Paris, spent the Paris Siege inside the city and was a member of the *Garde Nationale*. As such, he was at the forefront of events and produced two allegorical paintings of the siege: *Le Ballon* (1870) and *Le Pigeon* (beginning of 1871). It is essential to indicate that several known versions of Puvis's *Carrier Pigeon* exist: the one at the Musée Carnavalet is a preparatory sketch for the finished painting exhibited at Orsay, while two preliminary drawings for the *"Pigeon"* also exist, one at the Petit Palais and one at the Louvre. I wish to look at these versions in their chronological order (Petit Palais, Fig. 29, Carnavalet, Fig. 30 and the final version at Orsay, Fig. 31) in order to understand the logic behind Puvis' idea.

In the Petit Palais drawing, the town of Paris is closer than it is in the other versions, and Notre-Dame therefore larger. The woman, allegory of Paris, is not yet completely in black, nor is she as slender as she appears in the other versions. Of this

version, a critic notes that the model is definitely Puvis's partner the Princesse Cantacuzène, whereas in the finished painting "il est difficile de l'identifier (...) le visage est volontairement très impersonnel."[33]

In the second version (Carnavalet), the woman , completely dressed in black, her hair the same colour as her dress, forms a contrast with the white of the pigeon she is holding against her chest in a protective movement. Her other arm reaches for the sky, from which she is pushing back a threatening dark falcon (the Prussians would send falcons to kill the pigeons). In the first drawing, however, the falcon was not dark and thus not as menacing. In this second drawing, the artist seems to have chosen the tones he was going to use in the final version: very dark for the woman and the falcon, less so for the buildings in the background and the river Seine, and finally white for the snow covering the roofs of Paris. The fact that Notre-Dame and the Sainte-Chapelle stand in a rather dark tone, their presence therefore made obvious in the midst of the snow-covered houses, is probably quite significant. It seems that the painter wanted the viewers to identify them. The Conciergerie, on the left-hand side, underwent the same treatment and can also be easily spotted in spite of the lack of details.

Some more details can be seen in the final version (Orsay). The buildings along the Seine have windows, the towers of the Conciergerie are more visible, details of the bridge in the foreground can be seen, and Notre-Dame is more detailed too. In fact, Aimée Brown Price even compared the painting to a daguerreotype, because of the realism which validates it as an authentic document, thereby bridging the gap between allegory and realism[34]. Here the Conciergerie, the houses along the quay, the bridge and Notre-Dame are painted in the same tone. Their combination allows

the viewer to identify the scene without any possible mistake. This is Paris, proud even in dark times, and defending herself against the Prussians. But this pride is played down by Robert Rosenblum, who, underlining the importance of the colours, believes that the painting, with its "palette monochrome de tons froids et la rigidité des silhouettes noires soulignent le caractère tragique de la situation qui a donné lieu à ces visions [le *Pigeon* et le Ballon] pleines de mélancolie."[35] This is also Brown Price's opinion when she states that "the reduced range of hues in the definitive canvases suggest sadness"[36]. Another critic points out the fact that Puvis de Chavannes "se sent pris au piège", a proof of this being the way Paris is represented as "un espace urbain aux fortifications saillantes agressives"[37]. In this interpretation, Notre-Dame and the Sainte-Chapelle would not simply be elements identifying the city, but more sinister figures pointing their towers and spires to the sky in a rather menacing manner, as if even those two religious monuments, symbols of Paris, did not represent hope any longer.

But are these the only possible interpretations? Does the significance borne by Notre-Dame stop at simply being an element permitting the identification of the city depicted, or at representing the sufferings of the Parisians? I think it is possible to interpret the motif of Notre-Dame in this painting as being very much associated with the protection of Paris. Let us not forget that according to tradition, Sainte Geneviève protected the city from Attila the Hun, another Germanic invader. By picturing a woman, standing on her own, beside Notre-Dame and the Sainte-Chapelle (both reminders of the Christian aspect of Paris), Puvis de Chavannes creates a new – yet secular - Sainte Geneviève standing against a new peril. The cathedral, because

of its Christian nature, is part of this new character by helping to support its genuineness.

However, even though this quasi-Christian reading of the painting is possible, one must not forget the message engraved in the frame of the final version painting: *Echappé à la serre ennemie le message attendu exalte le coeur de la fière cité*. In this, no reference is made to Christianity. What matters is how proud the city is whilst under difficult circumstances. So in this respect the painting may be more about praising the Parisians and their attitude during the siege. It is worth mentioning here that the picture was very successful and therefore certainly touched the people of Paris: J. Buisson noted in 1899 in the *Gazette des beaux-arts* that about 50,000 photographs [or possibly prints] of the painting sold within a few days[38]. So the message carried by Puvis's allegory can certainly be considered as successful in reaching its audience. It was such a symbol that the French government donated this painting, as well as its pendant, *Le Ballon* (1871, Paris, Musée d'Orsay) to the city of Chicago after its great fire[39].

Jules Didier

The other painting of carrier pigeons, entitled *Les Pigeons messagers, novembre 1870* (Fig. 32) also has its place here because it can be read in several different ways, according to the place given to Notre-Dame and to a possible Biblical connection. Jules Didier (*Prix de Rome de paysage* 1857) shows in this scene the roofs of Paris, Notre-Dame and the Panthéon, and represents a carrier pigeon flying back to its nest,

where other pigeons can be seen. They are looked at by several people standing on roofs.

The pigeon here certainly represents hope. It is the central motif of the painting, and the viewer's attention is attracted to it thanks to several elements; the bird is placed in an area of sky without clouds which contrasts with the general darkness of the scene; it is flying over the city and therefore no building comes invading the view; the people standing on the roof, and particularly those placed in the middle of the canvas, look at the pigeon in a very excited way, one of the men is even pointing at it. Over a city plunged into dark colours – all the buildings, including Notre-Dame on the left hand-side and the Panthéon in the background, as well as the figures' clothes, are painted in dark tones -, the pigeon, it might be argued, represents hope, the expectation of a brighter future.

But the interpretation of this painting can certainly go further than this: over what can be seen as the dark 'sea' of the besieged city, the pigeon could be that of Noah's Ark, in search of dry land, a place to live without worries. In this case, the people become shipwrecked in a forbidding environment, looking with a mix of desperation and hope towards the bird that might save their lives. In this interpretation, Notre-Dame comes both as a reminder of this Biblical heritage, as a religious marker, but also possibly as a ship, its spire being the mast of a boat lost in the immensity of the sea. This idea of the ark was actually expressed by Jules Claretie in his journal of the Siege, when he compared the pigeon to the dove of the ark: "Au-dessus du navire en détresse de la cité parisienne, le blanc pigeon battrait des ailes comme la colombe de l'arche dans ce déluge nouveau qui submerge tout ce qui est l'art, la pensée, la science pacifique et l'amour!"[40]

But the importance given to the bird compared to that given to the cathedral (painted in muted grey tones in the background) can possibly also carry the idea that religion may not be able to help in such a desperate situation, whereas the carrier pigeon does. The church is relegated to the background, in the mass of other buildings, while the element which does matter to the people (they are looking at the pigeon and turning their backs on the cathedral) is the bird carrying news from the outside world. I do favour this interpretation, as the one building which is represented in details is the dovecot the bird is flying to, which occupies a large part of the right hand-side of the painting. Several white pigeons occupy it, the light tone of their feathers being once again in contrast with the overall darkness of the scene, and underlining their importance.

Victor Dargaud, L'Hôtel de Ville, en reconstruction *(1880)*

Even though this painting does not actually represent the *année terrible*, it does find its place in this section because it deals with a subject stemming directly from the Commune events.

This painting represents the rebuilding of the Paris town hall after it was burnt down by the Communards in May 1871, along with other symbolic monuments such as the Louvre and the Tuileries (Fig. 33). The city archives and the artistic treasures the building contained were destroyed. Following the end of the Commune, a competition was launched. Théodore Ballu and Pierre Deperthes, two architects whose idea was to rebuild the monument as it was, won it. Completion of the new Hôtel de Ville took eight years, and it was reopened in 1882. Dargaud's painting

shows the extent of the work by placing the Hôtel de Ville in this very particular context. The building takes up much of the space, the façade is seen covered in scaffolding, while a cluster of stones for use in the restoration occupies the entire foreground. In the background, to the right, one can see some blocks of flats on the quay, and behind them the silhouette of Notre-Dame.

This painting can be interpreted in two distinct ways. The first possible interpretation stems from the large space occupied by the building works on the façade, the very prominent scaffolding and the stones lying in the foreground, occupying a quarter of the canvas. In contrast with the scene of chaos of this foreground, and the empty shell of the Hôtel de Ville, Notre-Dame appears strong. In spite of the destruction undergone by several Parisian monuments (the Tuileries and the Cour des Comptes were also burnt down) which represented for the Communards the power of the state, Notre-Dame remained unscathed. This painting might therefore be seen as reminder of how fragile politics can be, and how solid the religious can stay. The stones scattered in front of the Hôtel de Ville and the impressive scaffolding emphasise the degree of destruction it underwent, while Notre-Dame, its silhouette standing in the background, does not need any support.

However, the second interpretation I want to suggest focuses on the large size given to the Hôtel de Ville in this representation, when compared to that of the cathedral. The *Mairie* occupies more than half of the length of the canvas, the entirety of it width on the left hand-side, while the stones for the repairs fill a quarter of the entire painting. This is no doubt an affirmation of the importance of the reconstruction of this institutional building, and consequently a statement on the importance of the building itself. Destroyed, it is now being born again from its

ashes, and appears very impressive already even though it is not even completed yet. One can see here a clear political message: the victory of the legal power over the Communards, the return to a normal kind of government which does not involve violence and destruction, but rather the reconstruction of the past of a building associated with republicanism. It is important to point out here again that the Hôtel de Ville was rebuilt identically. It seems therefore that the painter is celebrating the return of a Republic which could have been annihilated by the Commune. In this interpretation, Notre-Dame plays an important role as the supporter of the establishment. It represents the past, its solidity and its continuity, an idea now borne too by the *Mairie*.

However, the question of the size of the cathedral compared to that of the Hôtel de Ville has to be raised. Maybe the cathedral does not have a supportive role, but rather that of a comparative. By making the *Mairie* look very large in comparison to Notre-Dame, the painter may want to give the viewer the following message: we are in the presence of a great force, that of the Republic, able to rebuild such a monument, while in the background the ancient power that was the Church is not that great any more. The painter insists on the strong power of the Republic, which enabled it to be reborn even after the *année terrible* and continue its mission.

A cathedral of the lost provinces: Strasbourg cathedral in newspapers and in Gustave Doré's *La France protège ses enfants*

This section looks at another case-study, Strasbourg cathedral, as an icon of the lost provinces. Because of its situation in Alsace and its easily-recognizable shape (it has two towers only one of which is surmounted by a spire), this monument was used in many patriotic illustrations. This section will analyse a number of drawings published in newspaper as well as Gustave Doré's drawing *La France protège ses enfants* in order to show the various forms taken by this cathedral and explore the various manners in which their authors have expressed their patriotism.

Strasbourg cathedral in newspapers

On 9 August 1870, the Prussian army arrived before Strasbourg. The city refused to surrender and, consequently, had to suffer from a forty-day long siege and shelling. Three hundred people were killed, more than 2,000 injured, and several important buildings were hit by shells, amongst which was the cathedral. But in spite of this destruction, supplemented by the lack of food, the *Strasbourgeois* only felt hatred and contempt for their assailants. Finally on 27 September the general commanding the place accepted to negociate a surrender, and the siege ended the next day.

In the iconography referring to these events, the figure of the cathedral of Strasbourg appears several times as a symbolic reminder of the sufferings of the proud city. One such drawing can be found on the front page of *Le Monde illustré* on

10 September 1870 (Fig. 34). This is very much a picture to the glory of the courageous city: its defender, Général Uhrich, is portrayed in the middle, surrounded by evocations of the martyrdom of the town. A female figure on the right-hand side holds two laurel crowns, one of which is above the general's head. Just below her, another symbolic figure represents Strasbourg, standing proud, defending herself, a shield in one hand, and a sword in the other, a laurel wreath held over her. The male figures at the bottom of the composition represent the Prussians as barbarians and destroyers of culture: armed with a sledgehammer and a torch, they are running towards a mound of books with the obvious intention of setting fire to them. The barbarism of their behaviour is also emphasised by the physical resemblance of the first man with what one imagines Attila the Hun would have looked like: a crazed half-naked strong man sporting a long blond moustache and running towards his target without mercy. The consequence of his behaviour, as well as that of his accomplice, can be seen in the left hand-side drawing: above the roofs of Strasbourg, the spire of the cathedral raises itself through the black smoke hovering over the city. The role of the cathedral here is dual: not only does it emphasise the suffering of the town by attracting the viewer's attention to its fate, but it also places the city above the barbarian practices of its attackers. The 'bad' Prussians are placed at the bottom of the drawing, well under the symbolic elements aimed at proving how courageous and noble the city stands. The spire of the cathedral reaches for the sky above the smoke, just as the figure on the right reaches high with the two laurel crowns. This places them on a superior level to the attackers below. So even though they, and therefore the people of Strasbourg, are suffering, their sacrifice and pride places them largely above the barbarians.

Research uncovered two other representations of Strasbourg cathedral as a proud and courageous symbol in drawings showing the bombing of the city: the first one (*Le Monde illustré*, 10 September 1870, Fig. 35) represents the night bombing of 24 August; the other (*Le Monde illustré*, 17 September 1870, Fig. 36) represents an attack against the Prussians just outside the city walls. In both drawings the cathedral stands again as the symbol of a proud city which will not give up. On the first drawing the night is lit up by the incendiary bombs launched on the city: several fires have caught and smoke rises. But in spite of the apparent chaos and the arrival of yet more shells which can be seen in the sky, Strasbourg cathedral's elegant, elongated black silhouette stands straight. One can see its roof on fire, but I believe the artist did not only want to show destruction: by placing the easily-recognisable tower right in the middle of the composition and by setting it against a light grey backdrop of smoke to make it even more obvious, he insists on the city standing proud and refusing to give up, even though it is faced with barbarism. The second drawing carries the same sort of message, but is even more positive: the scene takes place just outside Strasbourg, on the river, and the Prussians are being shot at from the fortifications. They appear rather weak on their small boats and several of them have just been shot, and are represented in the process of falling. In the background, the city is burning in several places, but there is no smoke in front of the cathedral, so once again it stands very visible to the viewer, and even more so because it is the highest element of the composition. Moreover, it is placed directly above the Prussian group on the river, which makes it part of the main event recorded in this drawing and this ensures that the viewer's eye will be drawn to it. The cathedral is witnessing the battle scene, a scene rather positive for the *Strasbourgeois* as they are

killing the Prussians, so both this event and the standing spire of the monument remind us of the courage of the city who will carry on fighting in spite of being under siege.

But even though Strasbourg eventually had to surrender and consequently be occupied by the Prussians, its cathedral continued to represent the woe and patriotism of the city. I found two illustrations carrying such a message: they show the monument in the context of the funeral of Mlle Riton, a "demoiselle [qui] a péri victime de son dévouement pour les prisonniers français qui passent à proximité de Strasbourg", reported Martin Rach in *Le Monde illustré* on 24 June 1871. She had gone to Koenigshoffen "pour accomplir l'oeuvre patriotique"[41] when she fell off a train and was killed. The paper explains how her funeral was seen by the inhabitants of the city as an opportunity to express their patriotism "dans la grande nef de la cathédrale" for "un *enterrement militaire français*" (italics used in the paper). It adds that "il semblait que ce cercueil si honoré contenait quelque chose de cette nationalité française qui, quoi qu'on fasse, restera toujours au fond du coeur de tous les Alsaciens comme un dépôt sacré que doit un jour retrouver la France."[42] The article accompanies a large drawing occupying an entire page representing the interior of the cathedral with the coffin being brought in (Fig. 37). The enormous crowd looks towards it and it is possible to see that it is being followed by French soldiers in their uniforms. The sheer scale of the scene, the size of the crowd, the richly decorated coffin and the imposing vaults of the monument occupying two thirds of the picture make this a very important event. The young woman died for a country which has come to mourn her, and the Gothic vaults of the cathedral remind the viewer of the greatness of French architecture and France in general. This picture is an ode to

France and Frenchness at a time when the whole country was under the shock of losing the Alsace-Lorraine. The very same event was also pictured in *L'Illustration* on the same day: the cathedral also features prominently here, although here we are in the presence of the coffin leaving the cathedral (Fig. 38). A large crowd has gathered on the *parvis* for a scene which reflects on the grief felt by everyone: the motionless *Strasbourgeois* form a compact group beside the prominent coffin while the cathedral in the background stands grey and imposing over the people. Once again patriotism is present in the form of the French uniforms, the sheer size of the crowd who have gathered to pay tribute to a patriot and the Gothic cathedral.

This section has shown how illustrated newspapers of the years 1870-71 have used the figures of cathedrals in order to emphasise and support the ideas of pride and patriotism in the midst of war and suffering. The next will focus on a famous artist's take on Strasbourg cathedral as a symbol for the sufferings of the lost provinces. Gustave Doré's expressive *La France protège ses enfants* shows that it is not only the newspapers which expressed these ideas.

Gustave Doré's La France protège ses enfants *(made in 1871, published in 1883)*

Research has uncovered two versions of this work: one is a preparatory drawing kept at the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain de Strasbourg, the other the finished version, kept in a private collection (Figs. 39 and 40). The drawing represents a group of female figures with children, gathered around a winged angel,

while the background of the picture is occupied by the silhouette of Strasbourg cathedral.

This work relates to the loss to Prussia of Alsace and part of Lorraine in 1870 and is of considerable interest because we know of Gustave Doré's feelings about the loss of the region. He was born in Strasbourg in 1832, but left it as early as 1841 when his family moved to Bourg-en-Bresse. He then started working as a caricaturist in Paris in 1847, where he lived for the rest of his life. During the 1870-71 conflict, he enrolled in the National Guard, stayed in Paris during the siege, but moved to Versailles during the Commune. His involvement and his feelings about the events can be seen in *La France protège ses enfants*. "Doré was deeply moved by the loss of Alsace, where he was born, and vowed never to return."[43] Before delving into the significance of this work, it is important to underline the fact that Doré also executed many other drawings representing aspects of the conflict and the siege of Paris. *L'Enigme*, in which Doré depicts "une vision apocalyptique de la ville en flammes et d'un terrain dévasté, couvert de cadavres de militaires et de civils."[44], was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter (Fig. 21). In the foreground, the winged silhouette of a woman in tears detaches itself against the dark sky, as she interrogates a sphinx in the hope of receiving an answer to the horrors provoked by this war. The horror of the conflict is present again in scenes underlining the misery borne by the Parisians during the siege. Doré wrote: "(...) j'ai servi dans la Garde National à la fois à Paris et dans les environs... Demeurant ainsi à Paris, j'ai été témoin de beaucoup de drames et d'épisodes de ruines..."[45] So aside from allegories of the war (*Projet de Brevet de Garde National en 1870*[46], 1870, Paris, Musée Carnavalet; two *Scènes allégoriques de la guerre de 1870*[47], 1870, Paris, Private Collection; *l'Enigme*, *La*

Défense de Paris[48], 1871, Poughkeepsie-New York, Vassar College Art Gallery, Fonds Suzette Morton Davidson), the majority of Doré's work refers to what he witnessed. Some of the most striking represent the misery of the poor people of Paris: *Le Berceau renversé*[49] (1870-71, Strasbourg, Cabinet des Estampes) shows a dead child lying on a floor after a bombardment; *Scène du bombardement de Paris* (1870-71, Mulhouse, Musée des Beaux-Arts)[50] deals very realistically with the poor moving out of the areas threatened by German shells, taking away with them all the belongings they can carry; *Soeur de Charité sauvant un enfant* (1870-71, Le Havre, Musée des Beaux-Arts André Malraux)[51] made Théophile Gautier note that "on sent que l'artiste a vu ce qu'il peint"[52]: in the night, in a deserted street covered in snow, a nun carries a child away in her arms.[53]

The drawing entitled *La France protège ses enfants*, is of particular interest to this thesis because it combines Doré's attraction for the allegorical with his observation of the people. It is also interesting to compare the preparatory drawing and the finished version of this particular work, because Doré made several changes which add another dimension to the subject and its meaning.

In the preparatory drawing, the group of figures (the women, children and the allegorical angel) stands in a pyramidal shape, the winged angel, holding a sword, being at the top angle. The angel, a laurel-crowned female, is seated on a stone and looks sadly at an *Alsacienne* in her traditional head-dress, placed in the centre of the group, holding her child in a protective manner. Behind them, two other women and a child observe the central character, with again the same air of sadness on their faces. To the right of the group stands the silhouette of the instantly-recognisable Strasbourg cathedral. In this drawing, the attention of the viewer tends to be drawn to

the Alsatian woman and her baby, as everyone's gaze is directed towards the latter. The presence of the cathedral reminds the viewer about the circumstances to which this family has been driven by the conflict.

However, the overall sadness of the first drawing has been changed in the final version into a rather more vengeful address. Even though the angel and the background figures are still looking at the child, they do so in a less sad, possibly more 'serious' or concerned manner. The mother, however, does not look at her child any more, her gaze is directed in front of her, towards an invisible landscape and possibly an invisible enemy too. In this version, the focus is not any more on the group, as the pyramidal shape is disturbed by the addition of a roof in the background, to the left. This, combined with the gaze of the mother, added to the more distant presence of Strasbourg cathedral in the background, helps the viewer to see beyond the group and therefore changes the perspective he/she may have on the picture's meaning. Now the emphasis is not any more on the group's sadness, but on a possible vengeful future. The fact that the cathedral has been relegated to a more remote position in this version underlines the remoteness of Alsace. It seems beyond reach, lost in the midst of the horizon. While in the first drawing the cathedral looked rather close to the characters, Doré chose eventually to underline the difficulty of the task faced by France to win back the lost regions by drawing the cathedral further into the background. In this respect, the final title given to the picture may seem quite ironic: *La France protège ses enfants*, but does it really? The angel is represented sitting down, her sword by her side. The country has not been able to win back Alsace-Lorraine and the prospect of it looks very far indeed; the angel looks like she has more or less abandoned the struggle. The sadness felt by the artist, an Alsatian

himself, is evident: the cathedral of his childhood is pushed back into the background, unreachable. It almost seems like Doré was aware of the fact that the possibility of his ever returning to his homeland was impossible. There is still hope however, in the figure of the infant, as he will be the one fighting for his homeland in the future. In this respect this painting can be associated with another work by Doré, *L'Alsace meurtrie* or *L'Alsace*[54] (1872, Colmar, Conseil Général du Haut-Rhin) presented at the 1872 Salon. It shows an Alsatian woman in mourning, standing against a wall with her eyes closed. She holds a French flag in her hands whilst her mother, seated nearby, "soigne l'enfant bien-aimé, l'orphelin qui sera l'homme de la revanche"[55]. So it appears that Doré's wish for a *revanche*, as well as the sadness he felt, were made clear in these works.

The question of the destination of this drawing needs to be addressed in order to find out whether this illustration had any impact on its viewers. Even though made in 1871, it appears that *La France protège ses enfants* was not shown to the public before 1883, and even then it was in a very limited way. A gillotage of the preparatory drawing appeared in *Société d'Aquarellistes Français*[56] that very year, as well as in an article by Amelia Edwards in *The Art Journal* on the life and works of Doré[57]. These publications would have been read only by connoisseurs and therefore Doré's image would not have reached a large audience. This may well have been Doré's intention anyway, as the loss of his native province "came as a tragic surprise", cutting him off "from the scenes and friends of his birthplace"[58]. The artist reportedly refused to show in London the many war scenes he had represented: ""Not for the world!" he exclaimed to Miss Edwards. "Would you have me exhibit the misfortunes of my country?""[59]. So the scar of the war appears very much like a

personal wound, which Doré would have expressed mainly for himself in an illustration such as *La France protège ses enfants*. The image remains however a very good instance of a representation of loss combined with the hope of revenge.

This section has shown that cathedrals can indeed be associated with war, as was the case for the 1870-71 conflict. They do play an important role in the various drawings and paintings analysed here, for they add a dimension to their meaning. Puvis de Chavannes's female figure is supported by the religiosity of Notre-Dame in her attempt to protect Paris like Sainte Geneviève; whilst on the other hand Notre-Dame can also be read as part of the menace threatening the city. With Didier, Notre-Dame supports the possible comparison between the scene depicted and Noah's ark, while it can however also be read as a sign that religiosity is fading and cannot help the Parisians any longer. With Dargaud, two more possibilities are raised by the presence of the cathedral: that of a solid, long-lasting cathedral/religious power opposed to the fragility of temporal governments, or, on the other hand, the greatness of the latter and the ever-decreasing influence of the Church. Finally, by using Strasbourg cathedral as a symbol for the lost provinces, Doré underlines the difficult task lying ahead for the French people.

To sum up, one may draw the idea that whatever their final meaning, all these cathedrals have an eminently political side. The interesting point is that this political dimension is not always the same. These cathedrals are either religious or patriotic, or even, in the case of Dargaud's representation of Notre-Dame, support the idea of a strong democratic power. These three key points are essential, for they will reappear again in this thesis under other forms. Even a long time after the end of the Franco-

Prussian war, the themes of patriotism and democracy will be associated again with the great French cathedrals.

The cathedral as 'state' art

The following section will deal with a particular aspect of cathedrals, and one which may at first seem paradoxical: the use of the image of cathedrals in 'state' art, and in particular in public buildings such as *mairies*. The paradox stems from the use of a prominent Catholic building within what are essentially republican representations. This section therefore will delve into the problem posed by these particular pictures and attempt to explain why cathedrals were used in conjunction with republican themes, and how a Catholic monument may become a tool for republican representations. I have selected for this section four paintings which present various aspects of the republican imagery. The first painting, by Raoul Arus, presents Notre-Dame de Paris in the context of the 1870-71 war, therefore connecting this section with the previous one, whilst the two following works, one by Alfred Roll and the other by Emile Bin, move away from reality and place Gothic cathedrals in a positive allegorical context. Finally, Albert Besnard's allegory of the Republic may well present Notre-Dame from a rather more negative viewpoint.

However, one needs to understand beforehand the importance of decorating buildings such as *mairies*. Pierre Vaisse underlines in *La Troisième République et les peintres* that from 1876 onwards, public spending for paintings was now made for *mairies* and not for churches any longer. The town hall, "la fierté des républicains, la maison commune, symbole de vie démocratique" is "face à l'église, monument du

passé"[60]. A true "campagne de décoration"[61] started as early as 1876, with the 'commission administrative des Beaux-Arts' creating a 'sous-commission' in charge of looking for buildings in Paris where pictorial and sculptural decorations could be made. In parallel, another 'sous-commission' took charge of the suburban buildings. The importance of decorating public buildings was underlined by the sculptor Jules Dalou, a member of the latter commission, who talked of "la nécessité d'apporter le plus de soin possible à la décoration des édifices civils, et principalement des mairies, afin de donner à la loi une demeure digne d'elle"[62]. The importance of decorating public buildings was acknowledged even further in 1882 when Edouard Lockroy wrote in the 'budget des Beaux-Arts pour 1882' that orders made have been "exclusivement réservées aux préfectures, mairies, sous-préfectures", and that religious works of art were an "instrument de propagande cléricale"[63].

This declaration makes the study of cathedrals in the context of *mairies* even more puzzling: with such an anti-clerical attitude on the part of the very people in charge of the decorations, the images of cathedrals found in *mairies* pose problems. The following sections will therefore attempt to give some answers as to what these cathedrals represent, as they were obviously not intended to be religious images.

It is essential to realize that the subject of such decorations may not actually matter very much. In fact, this is acknowledged by Vaisse who points out that people entering public buildings had other preoccupations in mind than that of looking at and being edified by murals[64]. However, one cannot forget that during the Third Republic "on croyait, ou l'on voulait croire à la puissance et aux vertus de l'image peinte"[65]. Hence the strong possibility of being able to read in decorative paintings a certain propaganda from the state, a reflection of its ideas. We will therefore see how

cathedrals fit into Republican propaganda, what they brings to it. The main themes chosen for decorations are the glory of the Republic, its motto, the Republic and the Revolution, the history of the nation and its great men, and this is what we find in the paintings selected.

Raoul Arus and the patriotic cathedral: Débarquement des blessés de Champigny.

Arus (1848-1921) painted mostly military subjects during his career, and according to *Le Triomphe des mairies*, this interest shows a strong taste for weapons and uniforms, as well as for heroism, rather than an interest for "la défense de l'idéal républicain"[66]. Even so, I believe that the sketch he made entitled *Débarquement des blessés de Champigny* can certainly be read as a republican painting (Fig. 41).

Arus's painting is a proposal he made for the decoration of the *cabinet du Préfet* in Paris' Hôtel de Ville. Twenty artists participated in the competition held in 1889 whose theme was the commemoration of the Siege of Paris, and Arus won a second prize[67]. This means that his design was not actually retained to be painted on the walls of this office, but the subject he chose offers an insight into the sort of mural deemed acceptable for a civil office.

The scene, that of a group of wounded soldiers disembarking from a boat on the Seine, under the evening shadow of Notre-Dame, was inspired by facts. On 2 December 1870, after the battle at Champigny, the ambulance service, with the help of the *bateaux-mouches*, brought the wounded back to Paris. The scene represented is rather chaotic; many soldiers are disembarking in the light of torches and the

whole painting is quite dark. The chaos of the scene is reinforced by "la touche du peintre, plus lâchée que stylisée, [qui] est quelquefois confuse"[68].

The silhouette of Notre-Dame de Paris, clearly identifiable in the background in spite of the mist, not only sets the scene firmly in the capital but can also be interpreted as a powerful symbol of suffering and pride. It is the only identifiable building in the picture and stands for the city of Paris, a city in fear (darkness of the picture and chaos of the unloading of the wounded) and in mourning (the mist can be seen as a veil, or even a shroud surrounding the city). But in spite of this, the cathedral still stands proud, piercing the fog with its spire. The cathedral may be seen as part of the event in a positive manner if one focuses on this latter aspect. The scene which may at first appear hopeless can be read in a much more positive way if the viewer sees the lights on the quay and on the boat, the gesture of the soldier in the foreground reaching to what looks like a parcel of food from the crowd, and above all the silhouette of the cathedral pointing upwards.

Altogether, this picture of a cathedral intended for the Hôtel de Ville de Paris constitutes an excellent instance of Notre-Dame being placed in a patriotic context because the event shown is not that of a victory. Suffering is present in the figures of the wounded, and the darkness of night has fallen over the city. However, the cathedral appears to be associated not only with this sad episode but also with the positive expectations of a better future.

Two positive representations of cathedrals in a republican context: Alfred Roll's Art, Mouvement, Travail, Lumière *and Emile Bin's* Allégorie des Arts

The decoration commission ordered a design from Roll for *the salon d'introduction nord* of the Paris town hall in 1889 (Figs. 42 and 43). The painter described his own work in the following manner: "J'ai voulu représenter [...] dans le second panneau: Art, Travail, Action; c'est-à-dire ce qui nous élève et qui fortifie"[69]. In other words, he "cherche à exprimer au travers d'une allégorie de l'Art l'idée plus essentielle que l'être accomplit dans la création son destin spirituel"[70]. So he represented in the mural a golden statue being embraced by a man whilst in the background the silhouette of a Gothic cathedral is clearly visible.

So here the cathedral does not have a patriotic connotation, but one connecting it to the arts. The cathedral stands in this allegory as an admirable product of human creation, like the golden statue. Neither is this cathedral a religious symbol: no Christian symbol may be seen and the cathedral itself is not identifiable. It probably does not exist in reality, and is only the product of the imagination of the artist who represented here Gothic art as an admirable architectural movement, rather than a particular edifice. The beauty of the building is conveyed through the complex architectural details, as well as the golden light reflecting on its upper part, a detail which connects it to the statue. They both belong to the same worthy domain: that of the arts.

Émile Bin's *Allégorie des Arts* (1879) conveys the same ideas (Fig. 44). Presented at a competition for the decoration of the ceiling of the 'salle des mariages' of the *Mairie* of the 19th arrondissement, it did not receive any awards but interests us because of its representation of Notre-Dame. The scene proposed by Bin shows, on a plinth, a figure representing the city of Paris in front of another one representative of *la Renommée* (fame). They are surrounded by a group of artists symbolising the arts and defined by the attributes they hold: a palette, a painting, a map or a sculpture. Architecture is evoked in the background, with Notre-Dame and the Panthéon visible on the right, whilst the left-hand side is occupied by a modern building in construction. The idea is that the genius of France is present not only in the past, with the cathedral and the Panthéon, but also today and in the future (the construction of the building is not finished yet). Notre-Dame is part of this allegory, as it was in the previous one, as a reminder of the beauty and skills the French have been able to achieve for a long time in their glorious artistic history. The cathedral is here identifiable, as this painting was intended for a Parisian building, and anchors the whole theme of the design very much on Parisian soil, whilst Roll's mural was a lot more generic.

One may notice here however that the importance given to Notre-Dame and the Panthéon is not as much as that given to the new building on the left. The latter is more prominent in the picture, and appears to be closer to the foreground of the design. Bin may have wanted to give more prominence to the present (the artists in the foreground) and the future (the building site) than the past, as if the French had been able to build great monuments, but will be able to do even better in the future.

A cathedral with possible negative undertones: Albert Besnard's 14 juillet 1880.

Finally, this section includes an allegory painted by Besnard for the competition which took place in 1883-1884 in order to choose a décor for the *salle des fêtes* of the *Mairie* of the 4th arrondissement (Figs. 45 and 46). Besnard obtained a prize, but the jury chose the works of another artist for the decoration. Even though, Frédéric Hattat, in charge of reporting the results of the competition, underlined that Besnard's entry had been much appreciated too: "sa barque, sur laquelle la République traversait, un jour de fête nationale, la Seine illuminée, avait rallié bien des suffrages"[71].

Study of the painting, kept in the reserves of the Petit Palais, reveals a very brightly coloured sketch, where the Seine and the quays are inundated by light, whilst the red of the tricolour flags are echoed in the dress of the allegorical figure standing on the rowing boat, on the coat of arms painted at the front of the boat and on the quay. The critic Octave Mirbeau noted in his description of the large painting (now lost) made in 1885 following the 1883-4 sketch (but extremely similar to the sketch) that "au lointain, se dressent, entourées de vapeurs brillantes et de pâles lumières, les tours de Notre-Dame (...)"[72]. The dark silhouette of Notre-Dame towering in the background contrasts with the bright lights and does not attract the eye immediately. Its presence must however be questioned. Why does the painter represent it if he does not want viewers to see it clearly?

I believe we have in this composition an obvious division between on the one hand the modern, forward-looking Republic, in the shape of an allegory representing

Paris, advancing on the Seine towards its bright destiny, surrounded by light and rejoicing, and the other the old world represented by the ancient cathedral. Indeed, Mirbeau interpreted the painting as a "toile symbolique [qui] chante la gloire de Paris, le triomphe de l'intelligence, de l'avenir"[73]. The cathedral is left in darkness because it belongs to the past, to a bygone era. The rest, illuminated, belongs to the present and the future. The cathedral here, unlike in the other images studied previously in this section, is not seen in a positive manner. It does not appear to stand as a symbol of pride or beauty, but on the contrary as an emblem of the old-fashioned. It is also certainly possible to see here a rejection of Catholicism, as this obviously republican work pays homage to the figure of the Republic. The silhouette of Notre-Dame left in the dark implies the negation of what may be seen as a religion still belonging to the dark ages, stuck in the past. Besnard's resolutely forward-looking design leaves the cathedral of the past behind.

Joy Newton suggests that the large painting (now lost) made by Besnard from this sketch, and which he presented at the Salon of 1885 under the title *Paris*, was evoked by Zola in his novel *l'Oeuvre*[74], a proof that this painting must have been particularly appreciated and admired then. Indeed, Antony Valabrègue, a friend of Zola's, wrote that Besnard exhibited "une peinture qu'on n'a pas oubliée et qui fut discutée assez vivement"[75]. However Zola's description does not include the republican theme; he has however kept the towers of Notre-Dame and the atmospheric light of the illuminated quays[76].

Colette Baudoche: Metz cathedral and nationalism

This section will be concluded with Maurice Barrès's *Colette Baudoche* as this novel, published in 1909, reveals the deep nationalistic feelings shared by part of the French people and presents these feelings in parallel with a cathedral. One must bear in mind that these representations of a cathedral in a nationalistic manner are later than the previous section, because of the heightened tension with Germany. Madeleine Rebérioux notes in *La République radicale* that more and more inquests and studies about Germany were published at the turn of the century, highlighting how dangerous it was to France on a continental, maritime, colonial and economic perspective[77]. Barrès (1862-1923) was a traditionalist nationalist who founded his ideas on the cult of the motherland and that of the dead. In order to defend these, he created a paper in 1894, *La Cocarde*, and became the president of the Ligue des Patriotes in 1914. But it is in 1906 that he really started to gain acknowledgement for his actions and writings, becoming a 'député' for Paris and a member of the Académie Française.

In 1911, in a speech delivered secretly in Metz he mentioned the cathedral, in connection to the sadness of the Messins, a theme which comes back in an evident manner in the illustrations analyzed in this section:

> Nous [les Français] vous aimions quand vous étiez tristes, et dans cette longue période que l'on peut dire mystique où, réfugiés dans l'ombre de votre cathédrale, vous continuiez de voir avec les yeux de l'esprit la campagne autour de Metz trempée du sang le plus injustement récompensé, et la route de France couverte, aussi loin que l'oeil peut aller, par l'exode de vos concitoyens.[78]

This section will first explore briefly the text of *Colette Baudoche* in order to show the importance of the cathedral in the expression of nationalistic feelings, and

will then analyze a sample of two drawings made for a 1912-13 serial publication of the novel in *Lisez-moi bleu* (Figs. 47 and 48).

The novel

What makes *Colette Baudoche* particularly interesting in this chapter is the way Metz cathedral appears in a very nationalistic, anti-German novel. The story told by Maurice Barrès is that of Colette, a young girl living in Metz, a city which has been occupied by the Germans for 37 years, with her grand-mother. Because the two women are in financial need, they rent out two rooms to a young German teacher, Frederic Asmus. The young man turns out to be genuinely interested in France. He wants to practise his French with the two women, and is always delighted to listen to the old lady speak about the old times. He reads from the local erudite magazine, and little by little gets to know the country better. He also understands that the Germans should not be trying to impose themselves on France, but to learn from her and live in harmony with her. He feels very different from his fellow countrymen; he does not understand their need to impose the German language and ideology upon the French. As time goes by, Frederic Asmus spends more and more time with Colette and her grand-mother, even giving up accompanying his friends for a beer at night. He feels he has more in common with the two women than with them. The whole novel tells the path Asmus follows to become more French than German, and therefore a better man. Rather than thinking and reflecting about everything in a scientific way, he starts feeling, and therefore understanding the country and its inhabitants. He understands their pride, their desire to remain French. The novel focuses also, in a

very nationalistic manner, on all the negative aspects of the German people. They are described as people with no taste, no respect for other cultures, who drink a lot and eat very badly. Frederic Asmus, by getting out of these bad habits, is an exception.

The young man realises after a while that he has developed feelings for Colette, and proposes to her, despite having a fiancée in Germany. She is very indecisive, for she does like him, but cannot but see his nationality as an obstacle. She asks for a month to reach a decision, a month during which Asmus is away in Germany to break up with his German fiancée. He returns on the day when Colette and her grand-mother are off to Metz cathedral for a Requiem mass in memory of the French soldiers fallen during the siege of Metz. It is at this point that Barrès manages to turn the cathedral into a patriotic and nationalistic symbol. He describes several details of the cathedral which underline its French origins: "Les vitraux du choeur, bleu de roi, bleu de France et vert mêlé de jaune (...)"; "A voir la nef légère, où la plus fine armature soutient ces portes de lumière, il semble que Metz ait voulu dresser un symbole de sa loyauté."; "L'atmosphère y est favorable a tous les sentiments nés du sol messin."; "Elle s'est accrue des malheurs de la cité, et son vaisseau qui brille au-dessus de la campagne paraît, dans le désastre lorrain, la maison de refuge du patriotisme."[79]

The inhabitants want to "protéger leur cathédrale" and want "qu'elle demeure dediée au Dieu des Messins"[80]. The cathedral itself is something to defend against the Germans, and something very important indeed, for it represents their religion, their faith, and this has not been conquered yet.

Further, Barrès describes the Messins's faith as being "une foi municipale et catholique"[81], thus linking up Catholicism with the feeling of belonging to a

particular town, therefore connecting religion to a feeling of nationalism. "Ces Messins croient assister à la messe de leur civilisation" adds Barrès[82]. France and Catholicism therefore definitely go together. Being a Catholic, in this cathedral, is similar to being French. During the mass commemorating their dead, the people of Metz become French again.

"La cathédrale est pleine des émotions les plus vraies, sans rien de théâtral."[83] Moreover, these people's feelings are natural. They are not pretending to feel French, they do feel it. And Colette, amongst them, feels that she cannot betray those who died for France, even though it was already quite a long time ago. "Cette cathédrale, ces chants, ces notables, tout ce vaste appareil ébranle la pauvre fille, mais par-dessus tout la présence des trepassés."[84] Overcome by the atmosphere, Colette finds the answer she needs: she is going to refuse Asmus' proposal. She tells him just after the mass in the cathedral, where, in a wish to show her that he shared her feelings, he accompanied the two women. After listening to her, he turns away from her. "Il va réfléchir, des mois et des mois, pour savoir s'il doit admirer ou détester cette réponse."[85] Thus, after all, he has probably not changed that much deep inside. He still appears very much German and the reader can only congratulate Colette on her decision. Barrès does too, and in the last paragraph of the book, praises the young girl for her rightful choice and life, and encourages her to carry on: "Persévère à soigner les tombes, et garde toujours le pur langage de ta nation. Qu'elle continue a s'exhaler de tous tes mouvements, cette fidélite qui n'est pas un vain mot sur tes lèvres."[86]

The illustrations

The two illustrations chosen for this section reflect the feelings and ideas expressed by Barrès in the novel, and especially in the crucial 'cathedral' scene. They are extracted from a 1912-13 publication of the novel, and drawn by Louis-Charles Bombled.

In the first illustration[87] (Fig. 47), occupying most of a page, a crowd can be seen in the cathedral, most of them kneeling, the women wearing black, whilst in front of them an allegory seems to represent the glorious dead they are remembering. On a plinth made of wreaths, where words such as 'A nos morts' and '1870-71' can be read, a torch is burning, guarding a coffin wrapped in what must be a tricolour flag. Above the coffin, an image appears in a mist or possibly smoke: a soldier, accompanied by a few comrades, holding a flag bearing the word 'patrie'. The crowd gathered in the cathedral are obviously there to pay homage to the French dead who were killed when the region was invaded. The fact that the scene is set in the cathedral, a religious building, is important for two main reasons. First it connects the idea of nationalism with that of religion, implying that the latter may have a role to play in the defense of nationalistic ideas. Second, it points out that this is a strictly French gathering, the Germans being mostly non-Catholic. This in turn may lead to the idea that Gothic art is actually French (and not German as the adjective 'Gothic' may imply), it is an architecture the French should be proud of, exactly as they are proud of their illustrious dead.

This illustration also links up the height of the cathedral with the height of the glory of the soldiers shown. One cannot see the top of the pillars, only imagine them,

but the plinth, the coffin and the soldiers' figures all let the viewer's eye turn upwards, to the vastness of the nave and the vastness of their glory. The people of Metz kneeling at the bottom of the picture appear to be very little compared to the immensity of the ideals which lie above them.

Finally, the idea of hope is expressed through the burning torch, but also by the number of people who gathered for such a service. The dead have not been forgotten, their example is still revered, hope remains. It also appears evident that the prayers made in the cathedral are for the end of German rule and the beginnings of a new, united France.

The second illustration[88] shows the crowd again, this time from the side aisle (fig. 48). The cathedral is so full that many people have to stand. Once again one can see the women in mourning, whilst the men have taken off their hats as a sign of respect. They are all looking towards the same direction, presumably that of the officiating priest. The crowd, as stated in the illustration's legend, is a mix of people from various social backgrounds, all united in the same grief. One can for instance see a bearded man behind the middle pillar who certainly does not look as smartly dressed as the one standing in the foreground.

The immobility of the crowd, the shade of their outfits, as well as the pillars of the cathedrals, which are half painted in black, create an atmosphere of mourning and sadness. The crowd appears to be plunged in the darkness of their earthly lives, many of them bowing their heads in prayer, whilst above them the light pillars of the cathedral rise up to a possible hope. This scene therefore seems to be separated into two distinctive parts: that of the Messins living in mourning, and that of a possible

better future above them, symbolised by the much lighter shade of the pillars and the light coming out of the stained-glass windows. The cathedral therefore appears like a dual place: one of mourning and one of hope. It carries the painful memories and difficulties of the inhabitants of the city, whilst also reflecting their expectations, expressed through prayer.

These two examples showed how Metz cathedral has been used by Barrès and one of his illustrators to express nationalistic feelings. The cathedral is presented as explicitly French (in the first illustration) and connected to the grief of the Messins as well as their hopes (in both instances). The people of Metz, united in their cathedral, united in their grief and hope, share through the cathedral and the service taking place there their common feelings. The cathedral is therefore not only a place of gathering, but also a bearer of expectations, a set where the future as well as the memories can be expressed. Because it has remained Catholic, it is not a place where the Germans invaders may go very often, and therefore serves as a French stronghold.

This chapter therefore concludes on a nationalistic note, as it started with many of the *année terrible* illustrations and paintings, demonstrating how cathedrals can be turned into instruments of propaganda. The scale of this 'propaganda' differs according to the various pictures but it is indeed a recurrent theme throughout the period studied, as shown in other chapters. The various levels of nationalism shown

by artists here also reminds us that different levels of nationalism were shown by the French people too. Poincaré's was considered as moderate, whilst Barrès was described as an "exalté"[89]. The diversity of the pictures studied here (magazine illustrations, lithographs, paintings) should also be considered: different kinds of audiences would have seen these either in *mairies*, books, periodicals, exhibitions or at the Salon and they would have therefore have had an impact on possibly nearly the whole of French society. So the public debate about *revanche* and nationalism was certainly not only left to politicians but had a very widespread audience. The next chapter will go even further and analyse how cathedrals were used in schoolbooks and educational publications in order to teach the young French about their motherland.

The chronological span of this chapter is also an important factor as this chapter presented drawings made for magazines during the *année terrible*, other works which refer to the 1870-71 events by looking back at them, or illustrations such as the ones for *Colette Baudoche* which lead us right to the end of the period studied. This allowed for a wide analysis of the image of cathedrals in a nationalistic context between 1870 and 1914, showing a continuity in the way they were used by different artists. The cathedrals of the conflict, symbols of both suffering and pride, find in illustrations and paintings referring to the 1870-71 events a renewed, stronger meaning. They were already regarded as monuments that the French should feel proud of, as a proof of the glorious past of the nation, but placed within a context such as the conflict they take on even more significance to really become nationalistic, to truly support the nation which built them. The proud cathedral,

raising its spire towards the sky, encourages the people of France to continue the struggle.

One must however remember that not all the paintings and illustrations representing cathedrals during this period necessarily use its motif in such a way. Dargaud's painting of the *Hôtel de Ville, en reconstruction* is such a work. It underlines the importance of the republic whilst dwarfing that of the cathedral. So as well as a nationalistic way of representing cathedrals, we also find during that period an anti-clericalism associated to a particular way of representing a cathedral.

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[1] In BARRES, M., 1918, p.162. 'Un discours à Metz prononcé par Maurice Barrès le 15 août 1911'.
[2] TOMBS, R., 1996, p. 424.
[3] TOMBS, R., 1996, p. 427.
[4] TOMBS, R., 1996, p. 430.
[5] On this subject of the artists and the Commune, see CLAYSON, H. , 2002 and MILNER, J., 2000.
[6] ROSENBLUM, R, 1995, p.250.
[7] CLAYSON, H, 2002.
[8] CAILLER, P., 1953, p. 152.
[9] Rep. in MILNER, J., 2000, p. 105.
[10] Rep. in MILNER, J., 2000, p. 174.
[11] Rep. in MILNER, J., 2000, p. 110.
[12] Exhibited at the Salon des artistes indépendants, 1905.
[13] ROSENBLUM, R., 1995, p.251.
[14] Drawing originally published in illustrated newspapers and published as a fac-simile by MARTY, A., 1907, illustration n. 99.
[15] The paper does not give an exact date but does precise that the voluntary contributions towards the cost of cannons stopped a few days before the end of the siege.
[16] *L'Univers*, lundi 22 mai 1871.
[17] *L'Univers*, dimanche 9 avril 1871.
[18] *L'Univers*, lundi-mardi 10-11 avril 1871.
[19] LE CHEVALIER, L., 1871, p. 187.
[20] Ibid., p. 187.
[21] Ibid., p. 187.
[22] Ibid., p. 188.
[23] Ibid., p.160.
[24] *L'Univers*, dimanche 28 Mai 1871.
[25] MANET, E., 2002, pp.30-31.
[26] CLARETIE, J., 1871, p. 197.
[27] CLARETIE, J., 1871, pp. 197-198.
[28] LEHIDEUX-VERNIMMEN, V., 2002, p. 151.
[29] Ibid., p. 158 (letter dated samedi 20 novembre 1870).
[30] DESPLATS, V., 1980, p. 104.
[31] Ibid., p. 150.
[32] Ibid., p. 154.
[33] *Puvis de Chavannes*, 1976, p.108.

[34] BROWN PRICE, A., 1977, p. 31.
[35] ROSENBLUM, R., 1995, p.250.
[36] BROWN PRICE, A., 1977, p. 31.
[37] TILLIER, B (http://www.histoire-image.org/site/etude_comp/etude_comp_detail.php?analyse_id=27&id_sel=73&type=contexte)
[38] BUISSON, J., *Gazette des Beaux-Arts,* 1899, quoted in BROWN PRICE, *Gazette des Beaux*-Arts, 1977, p. 31.
[39] BROWN PRICE, A., 1977, p. 31.
[40] CLARETIE, J., 1871, p. 198.
[41] *Le Monde illustré*, n. 741, 24 juin 1871, p. 391.
[42] *Le Monde illustré*, n. 741, 24 juin 1871, p. 394.
[43] CLAPP, S.F. et al, 1983, p.46.
[44] ROSENBLUM, R., 1995, p.250.
[45] Cited in *Gustave Doré 1832-1883*, 1983, p. 119.
[46] Rep. in *Gustave Doré 1832-1883*, 1983, p. 118.
[47] Rep. in *Gustave Doré 1832-1883*, 1983, p. 119-120.
[48] Rep. in *Gustave Doré 1832-1883*, 1983, p. 128.
[49] Rep. in *Gustave Doré 1832-1883*, 1983, p. 124.
[50] Also called *Déménagement sous le bombardement en 1870.* Rep. in *Gustave Doré 1832-1883*, 1983, p. 124.
[51] Also called *Soeur de Charité portant un enfant blessé, Episode du Siège de Paris en 1870.* Rep. in *Gustave Doré 1832-1883*, 1983, p. 125.
[52] GAUTIER, 1871, p. 220; cited in *Gustave Doré 1832-1883*, 1983, p. 125.
[53] Other realistic works include *Carré d'Infanterie* (1870, Strasbourg, Cabinet des Estampes), an *Album de vingt-six dessins sur le siège de Paris* (1870-71, Paris, Musée Carnavalet), *Scène du siège de Paris* (1870-71, Genève, Private Collection), *Le Départ du Garde National* (1870-71, Paris, Private Collection), *Le Garde blessé* (1870-71, Paris, Private Collection), *Le Convoi de blessés* (1871, Paris, Collection M. Lesieutre). All rep. in *Gustave Doré 1832-1883*, 1983, pp. 119-127.
[54] Rep. in *Gustave Doré 1832-1883*, 1983, p. 131.
[55] DELORME, R., 1879, p. 50, quoted in *Gustave Doré 1832-1883*, 1983, p. 130.
[56] 'Société d'Aquarellistes Français', 1883, Vol. I, p.94. Mentioned in Clapp, S. F., 1983.
[57] Gustave Doré: Personal Recollections of the Artist and his Works, *The Art Journal*, 1883, p.389. Mentioned in Clapp, S.F., 1983.
[58] ROSE, M., 1946, p. 44.
[59] Ibid., p. 44.
[60] VAISSE, P., 1995, p. 190.
[61] Ibid., p.191.
[62] Archives du département de la Seine, quoted by VAISSE, P., 1995, pp. 191-2.
[63] LOCKROY, *Rapport sur le budget des Beaux-Arts pour 1882*, p.2, quoted in VAISSE, P., 1995, pp. 192-3.
[64] VAISSE, P., 1995, p. 269.
[65] Ibid., p.270.
[66] BUROLLET, T., IMBERT, D., FOLLIOT, F., 1987, p. 363.
[67] The painter Adolphe Binet won the competition. BUROLLET, T., IMBERT, D., FOLLIOT, F. 1987, p. 346.
[68] BUROLLET, T., IMBERT, D., FOLLIOT, F, 1987, p. 363.
[69] VACHON, M., *Le nouvel Hôtel de Ville de Paris (1872-1900)*, Paris, 1900, p. 139, quoted in BUROLLET, T., IMBERT, D., FOLLIOT, F, 1987, p. 381.
[70] BUROLLET, T., IMBERT, D., FOLLIOT, F, 1987, p. 381.
[71] HATTAT, F., *Concours de peinture pour la décoration artistique des mairies des IVe, XVe, et Xxe arrondissements. Rapport général sur les opérations du jury*, Paris, 1885, quoted in BUROLLET, T., IMBERT, D., FOLLIOT, F, 1987, p. 139.
[72] Mirbeau in *La* France, 17 May 1885, quoted in NEWTON, J., 2000, p. 242.
[73] Ibid.
[74] NEWTON, J., 2000, p. 239.
[75] *Revue des Arts décoratifs*, vol. XII, "Les artistes décorateurs: M. Albert Besnard", nov-déc 1891, pp. 135-145, quoted in NEWTON, J., 2000, p. 245.

[76] Notre-Dame is not mentioned in the following extract describing the painting, but is however present in the scene witnessed by Claude Lantier which inspired him to paint the Seine and its quays. "C'était une nuit d'hiver au ciel brouillé, d'un noir de suie qu'une bise soufflant de l'ouest, rendait très froide. Paris allumé s'était endormi, il n'y avait plus là que la vie des becs de gaz, des taches rondes qui scintillaient, qui se rapetissaient pour n'être, au loin, qu'une poussière d'étoiles fxes. D'abord, les quais se déroulaient, avec leur double rang de perles lumineuses, dont la réverbération éclairait d'une lueur les façades des premiers plans, à gauche, les maisons du quai du Louvre, à droite, les deux ailes de l'Institut, masses confuses de bâtiments et de bâtisses qui se perdaient ensuite en un redoublement d'ombre, piqué des étincelles lointaines. Puis entre ces cordons fuyant à perte de vue, les ponts jetaient des barres de lumières, de plus en plus minces, faites chacune d'une traînée de paillettes, par groupes et commes suspendues. Et là, dans la Seine éclatait la splendeur nocturne de l'eau vivante des villes, chaque bec de gaz reflétait sa flamme, un noyau qui s'allongeait en une queue de comète. Les plus proches, se confondaient, incendiaient le courant de larges éventails de braise, réguliers et symétriques ; les plus reculés, sous les ponts, n'étaient que des petites touches de feu immobiles. Mais les grandes queues embrasées vivaient, remuantes à mesure qu'elles s'étalaient, noir et or, d'un continuel frissonnement d'écailles où l'on sentait la coulée infinie de l'eau. Toute la Seine en était allumée comme d'une fête intérieure, d'une féérie mystérieuse et profonde, faisant passer des valses derrière les vitres rougeoyantes du fleuve. En haut, au-dessus de cet incendie, au-dessus des quais étoilés, il y avait dans le ciel sans astres une rouge nuée, l'exhalaison chaude et phosphorescente qui, chaque nuit, met au sommeil de la ville une crête de volcan." Emile Zola, *L'Oeuvre*.

[77] REBERIOUX, M., 1975, p. 149.

[78]In BARRES, M., 1918, p.162. 'Un discours à Metz prononcé par Maurice Barrès le 15 août 1911'.

[79] All from BARRES, M., 1966, p.244.

[80] BARRES, M., 1966, p.244.

[81] Ibid., p.247.

[82] Ibid., p.247.

[83] Ibid., p.247.

[84] Ibid., p.247.

[85] Ibid., p.249.

[86] Ibid., p.249.

[87] BARRES, M., 15 décembre 1912-1er février 1913, p.113.

[88] Ibid. p.203.

[89] REBERIOUX, M., 1975, p. 150.

Chapter Two
Teaching the Cathedral

Aussi les écrivains étrangers du XIIème et du XIIIème siècles donnèrent-ils à l'art gothique le seul nom qui lui convienne, celui d'art français.
Parmentier, A., *Album* Historique, 1895[1]

Les voûtes de Notre-Dame, depuis lors, n'ont cessé de retentir chaque fois que la France était en péril ou en fête. Leurs cloches ont sonné non seulement pour la naissance ou la mort d'un homme, mais pour les espérances et les deuils de la patrie entière. -Oh! Dit Julien, entrons donc nous aussi à Notre-Dame, voulez-vous, mon oncle? Et nous y prierons Dieu tous les trois pour la grandeur de la France.
Bruno, G., *Le Tour de la France par Deux Enfants*, 1882[2]

The first chapter dealt in part with 'official' representations of cathedrals such as the ones presented to competitions for *mairie* decorations. It also showed how these monuments could be utilised by artists, illustrators and writers to serve a particular purpose, that of promoting feelings of nationalism. The present section will also deal with this theme in a very particular domain, that of education. It intends to show how educational material (especially that used in schools) interpreted cathedrals between 1870 and 1914 by focusing on the various aspects they take. I will show that nationalism was at the forefront, but that cathedrals also symbolised other values such as democracy and monarchism.

In order to collect primary sources, research has been undertaken in the collections of the Bibliothèque de l'Heure Joyeuse[3] in Paris, as well as the old school books collections of the Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique[4]. This research provided me with material ranging from the classic *Le Tour de la France par deux Enfants*[5] (first published in 1877), state schoolbooks by Ernest Lavisse or de Crozals, to Catholic

schoolbooks such as the *Histoire de France* published by Mame et Fils in 1897 and 1899, or a Catholic children's magazine of the end of the 19th century, *Le Jeune Age Illustré*. In order to complete this sample of publications, I also analyzed the way cathedrals were presented in late 19th century academic publications such as Emile Mâle's *L'Art Religieux du XIIIème siècle en France* (first published 1898) and dictionaries. Using this relatively unexplored reservoir of primary material, I will argue that the image of cathedrals given to the public, and to children in particular, changes according to whether it is addressed to a lay or religious audience, but also that most of the books present cathedrals as symbols of the greatness of France. The illustrations, when present, will be analyzed in conjunction with the text in order to understand how they, too, articulate meanings to the learner.

But before this analysis of both secular and religious schoolbooks, it is necessary to place them in the educational context of their time. The way they present French cathedrals can only be understood within the very particular political and religious climate of the beginning of the Third Republic. In a regime growing more and more anticlerical on the one hand, and with a system of Catholic schools on the other, with many other tendencies in between, it is necessary to explore the educational laws promulgated by the Republic, as well as the ideas the civil and ecclesiastical authorities wanted to promote. I will then show, via the analysis of several schoolbooks, magazines and other educational publications, both secular and religious, that through their schools, both the state and the Catholics were fighting not only for their very own values, but also, beyond their differences, for a great, united France, ready for revenge after the Franco-Prussian conflict.

Secular laws and republican educational ideas

In order to understand the way in which children were taught in state schools in the period which interests us, one needs to be aware of the official guidelines on teaching at the time, as well as the political background in which they were set. This is the context in which to understand the image of cathedrals presented in secular educational publications. "L'enseignement de l'École républicaine a incontestablement renforcé le sentiment d'appartenance à la nation française" stated Pierre Albertini[6], a specialist in the history of education, in 1992. The following shows why and how the *Ecole républicaine* succeeded in doing so.

The realization that France needed a better education for its children was a direct consequence of the 1870 defeat by the Prussians. Humiliated, the French understood that the Prussians had won the war because they were better educated. Indeed it was said at the time that "l'instituteur allemand" had won the conflict. So if there was ever a chance of revenge, if the country was to regain national pride, the educational system needed to be completely reformed. The Prussians offered free, compulsory schooling to all children; the schoolteachers were well trained and well paid; schools were numerous; universities were linked to industries. The French saw in the application of this model a condition for the improvement of the nation. From then on, more and more politicians understood the importance of education. The Ligue de l'enseignement[7], an association encouraging the development of popular education founded in 1866, collected in 1872

1.3 million signatures on a petition in favour of a secular, free and compulsory education. Until the *Lois Ferry* were voted in 1882, the Ligue carried on its fight. Léon Gambetta was one of its numerous supporters: he wanted the French to be patriots and was "convaincu du rôle de l'éducation populaire dans la préparation intellectuelle et morale de la "revanche" qu'il appelle alors de ses voeux"[8], notes Jean-Michel Gaillard, a contemporary collaborator to *Le Monde de l'Education*. Another group fought for the reform of the university system: the 'Association française pour l'avancement des sciences'. Its motto itself proved its attachment to the motherland: "Par la science, pour la patrie".

The link between education and patriotism, or how to raise the level of patriotism amongst the French, a notion that I found particularly evident in schoolbooks, was therefore already present at the very beginning of the educational reforms, and was certainly a base onto which several laws would be promulgated in the following years. The politicians, as well as the French as a nation, understood the need for a stronger, that is to say a better educated, people.

The founder of the "école de la République" was Jules Ferry (1832-1893), a man devoted to the ideals of the Third Republic. He was in favour of a strong regime, made no secret of his religious scepticism, had a civil wedding, and was the instigator of the law on divorce. After a career as a lawyer and journalist, he became a Republican *député* for Paris in 1869. From then on, his interest in educational matters grew, and when the Republicans came to power in 1879, he became "Ministre de l'Instruction Publique". He wanted to fight the Church, but also the socialists, whose ideas he considered dangerous

because of their utopian vision. For him, school should be the "creuset de l'unité nationale"[9], and the *instituteurs* responsible for Republican order and democracy. On June 16th, 1881, the first "Loi Ferry" instituted free schooling for all children in state schools. Schools became a public service rather than being administered by local notables. Schoolteachers were now going to be paid by the state, which meant that it would from then on have a strong control over what was to be taught. In the following "Loi du 28 mars 1882", Ferry imposed the compulsory nature of school education, as well as its secularity. This same law stated what primary teaching should include. The first, and presumably most important, section of the curriculum listed is "l'instruction morale et civique". It comes even before "la lecture et l'écriture"[10], showing how essential such teaching was considered. This "instruction morale" included a number of topics, amongst them the respect for the law, the love for truth, justice, and hygiene. Gaillard notes that "il convient aussi de relier morale et instruction civique autour de l'exaltation de la patrie, des principes fondamentaux de la République"[11]. This importance given to the motherland and its greatness is one of the main themes present around the descriptions and images of cathedrals presented in schoolbooks, as the next section will show.

Another theme, that of *revanche*, directly linked to that of the greatness of the nation, appears in several publications of the early 1880s. In *Le Bulletin de la Ligue française de l'Enseignement*, Jean Macé, the founder of the Ligue, underlines in 1882 the important role of the so-called *bataillons scolaires*[12], even though these were in fact short-lived: "L'important, c'est de commencer tout de suite et de donner aux campagnes de France le spectacle de leurs enfants se préparant, dès l'Ecole, à défendre le sol de la

patrie, si jamais l'étranger essayait de revenir le fouler."[13] A periodical for schoolteachers, *L'Ecole*, also recommended in 1884 that children should learn their national anthem, *la Chanson de Roland* and *l'Hymne à Jeanne d'Arc*, concluding that maybe then, "après les horreurs de Sedan, nous aurons (...) la revanche"[14], implying that strong feelings for the motherland can be taught in order to ready the children for battle. We will see below that the schoolbooks of the time gave an image of France that underlined its grandeur through the cathedrals: this goes very much in the direction instructed by laws such as the 1882 Loi Ferry insisting on moral and civic instruction. The feeling of belonging to a great nation was also, as *L'Ecole* showed in its advice, a way to move towards *revanche* in a united, proud nation.

In 1888, a *Lettre aux instituteurs*[15] written by Jean Jaurès (1859-1914), then a young, intellectual socialist *député*, gave some indication as to what the schoolteachers were expected to do. He insisted on the schoolteacher being "responsable de la patrie" and therefore responsible for turning young minds into good citizens. The *instituteurs* had to teach their pupils about "[les] grandes choses qui intéressent la pensée et la conscience humaine", and also about "le principe de notre grandeur : la fierté unie à la tendresse." So the idea that the teacher was there to produce good citizens, proud of their country, was once again reiterated by a politician of the left. It is then no wonder that schoolbooks followed these guidelines by showing French schoolchildren the elements of history they could be proud of, such as Gothic cathedrals. This was also the time of the great popularity of the populist Général Georges Boulanger, minister of war in 1886-87, who was nicknamed 'Général revanche' for his aggressive attitude towards Germany. His name gave birth to a nationalist movement, *Boulangisme*, and the man

himself attracted followers from the lower classes, for whom he showed a sense of consideration, and also from the right, thanks to his military background.

However, Mona Ozouf notes in *L'Ecole, l'Eglise et la République 1871-1914* that, from 1904 onwards, the notion of "patriotism" shifted from a common interest from both religious and state education to being abandoned by the state[16]. While *La Revue de l'Enseignement* demanded that a synonym be found for "patriotisme", the right attracted the hopes of those who wanted the army to gain power over France, and Christian spirit was considered to be naturally linked to patriotism. So if patriotism meant belonging to the right, then the Republicans would surely want to introduce a softer nuance of patriotism in their books. This does not however seem to be really the case in the books I studied. They tend to become void of religious references, but do keep the proud patriotic stance the earlier books showed.

The question of the meaning of patriotism is a complex one, because, as we have just seen above, it appears to be rather fluid and move from side to another. Patriotism, which is described by the Oxford Dictionary as love of or zealous devotion to one's country, is nowadays mostly associated with right-wing politics but was much more widespread under the Third Republic. I will show in the analysis of several schoolbooks, both from the Republican and the right side, that patriotism was an intrinsic part of French society between 1870 and 1914, and that this can be seen in the way cathedrals were used to make children proud of their motherland. Cathedrals were a key image in the promotion of patriotism.

The Religious Question

If patriotism can be read between the lines of both secular and religious schoolbooks, there is however a definite lack of references to religion in several of the secular schoolbooks I studied, as well as in Emile Mâle's publication, as I will show below in the detailed analysis of these various publications. This lack of religious references was also a result of the laws of the Third Republic. The position of some Republicans regarding the question of religion in schools could be very extreme: Paul Bert, minister for the *Instruction Publique* in an ephemeral cabinet between November 1881 and January 1882, wanted no mention of God at all in state schoolbooks. But he did not remain in place for very long, and his suggestion never became a law. The "Loi du 28 mars 1882" states that parents are free to give a religious education to their children, but that it should be done outside school. Thursdays were set aside for this matter. The "Loi Goblet" (30 October 1886) reinforces the latter by stipulating that "dans les écoles publiques de tout ordre, l'enseignement est exclusivement confié à un personnel laïque."[17] This tendency to rid schools of anything to do with religion continued, and in 1904, religious congregations members were forbidden from teaching, while in 1905, the Church was officially separated from the state.

So, the series of laws and the ideas I have mentioned in this section explain why the image of French cathedrals is presented in a very patriotic, and gradually less religious way in schoolbooks. The Republican teacher, with the help of these books, was meant to give schoolchildren an idea of the grandeur of their nation, as well as turn them into

democracy-loving citizens, hence the importance given to the communes and corporations, which, as we will see below, were mentioned a number of times beside the cathedrals. Indeed, on this topic of the French nation, Albertini stated in 1992 that "l'enseignement de l'école républicaine a incontestablement renforcé le sentiment d'appartenance à la nation française"[18]. The teachers, with the help of books such as the ones I am about to explore, were the makers of these new generations of French, who felt more attached to their nation than their ancestors. Albertini notes however the downside to this new feeling of attachment: schoolbooks insist on the messianic function of the French people, and this could be believed in a very naïve manner.

The schoolteacher also wanted to turn the children into citizens whose judgment would not be affected by religion, and this is why, even when the lessons were about monuments such as cathedrals, the authors made sure that they were not encouraging pupils to be attracted by Christianity, but by values much more consistent with the ideals of the Republic.

Cathedrals in state school books: the great medieval France

A Review of History Books

It is instructive to analyze how the Third Republic, through the books used in state schools, presented the French cathedrals to French children. This will reflect the various

ideas of patriotism, pride and the importance of democracy discussed above. The history books I found and base my analysis on here cover the period from 1880 to 1911.

An 1880 schoolbook by Louis Cons, *Histoire de la France-depuis les origines jusqu'à nos jours (cours moyen)*[19], aimed at children aged 9 to 11, presents its chapter on *l'apogée du Moyen age*[20] in the following manner: a drawing representing Notre-Dame de Paris in its medieval setting of old houses is placed at the top of the page, whilst the chapter starts with describing the foundation of the Université de Paris, explaining that it was so famous that students from all over Europe would come to study there (Fig. 49). The second paragraph is devoted to the transformation of the arts. A brief description of "le style ogival ou gothique" is given, and the author presents Reims, Amiens and Paris cathedrals as "chefs-d'oeuvre". This very factual account does not insist very much on the topic, and presents the cathedrals as masterpieces of a time which had other achievements too, such as the university, or new kinds of literature.

Ten years later, the famous Ernest Lavisse (1842-1922), a History professor at the Sorbonne, author of primary school History books, a man considered the "pape de l'histoire officielle" of the Third Republic[21], presented the French cathedrals in his *Histoire de France et Notions Sommaires d'Histoire Générale-Moyen Age (première année)*[22], a book written in association with Paul Dupuy. This book is a major reference for this study as it was so popular it acquired a quasi-monopoly in state schools. It shows four drawings of cathedrals (Bourges, Amiens, Chartres and Rouen), which the author chose to entwine with the history of the corporations (Fig. 50). A paragraph on the cathedrals themselves follows, but Lavisse deliberately placed beforehand his summary

on "les individus de petites conditions [qui] cherchèrent de bonne heure à s'associer les uns aux autres"[23] and "élisaient un conseil dont les membres, [...] jugeaient les différends qui pouvaient s'élever dans le sein de la corporation, et défendaient ses intérêts toutes les fois qu'il y avait lieu de le faire."[24] This is an obvious reference to the importance of democracy. The fact that the cathedral drawings were placed on these pages is also probably significant: they seem to say that had the corporations not existed, such masterpieces may not have been built at all. In the Middle Ages professions organized themselves in corporations, which meant that young people wanting to learn a trade had to follow particular rules in order to finally become a *maître* and have the right to open their own business[25]. In fact, the system of the corporations, because in theory it allowed young men from a poor background to access a better place in society, may be put in parallel with republicanism, whose ideals permit anyone, in theory, to climb the rungs of the ladder of society.

Following the explanation on corporations, Lavisse gave a very short paragraph on the cathedrals themselves, but it does not however give the reader much explanation about them. It is a simple list of the greatest of them, with no reference to Gothic art or its characteristics, and no explanation is given as to why the cathedrals were built. The chapter just carries on to naming the other great French achievements of the time: the universities, the writers, and the poets who wrote about medieval heroes. The question must therefore be asked as to why Lavisse did not discuss the cathedrals any further. It is likely that, as a man highly regarded by the republican regime, his aim may have been to stay in line with republican ideas. Hence the importance given to showing the greatness of France in the Middle Ages in general terms rather than praising the cathedrals in

particular. So in Lavisse, as in Louis Cons, the cathedral is very much presented to school children as a symbol of the grandeur of France. The fact that Lavisse did want to pass this sort of message about France through to schoolchildren appears clearly when one looks at the author's biography. His History books were received in a very positive manner; Ferdinand Buisson, the "directeur de l'enseignement primaire" between 1879 and 1896 described the first 1884 edition as a "petit livre d'histoire vraiment national et vraiment libéral que nous demandions pour être un instrument d'éducation, voire même d'éducation morale"[26]. This is confirmed by Pierre Nora who wrote that the aim of Lavisse's book was to "fondre en un tout indissociable trois notions différentes: une notion historique, la patrie; une notion politique, la République; une notion philosophique, la liberté"[27]. These three notions are indeed present in the chapter dealing with the French cathedrals. A further proof of the book's obvious patriotism is Lavisse's own admission in 1891 to France's duty towards Alsace, in which, interestingly, he uses the spire of Strasbourg cathedral as a symbol, an element already seen many times in the previous chapter with similar connotations: "I have said that we have a permanent duty to the lost provinces, and repeated it often. Strasbourg's spire has never vanished from my horizon. To me it has always stood apart, soaring heavenward (...)"[28]. In 1885, he had also explained, in a book on teaching, the importance of History being taught to children. According to Lavisse, the teacher should tell his pupils that "à l'enseignement historique incombe le devoir de faire aimer et faire comprendre la patrie", added that "le patriotisme a besoin d'être cultivé", and that the teaching of History should have a moral and patriotic aim[29].

The tendency to link Gothic art and Frenchness is also an important feature of these books and is confirmed in an 1893 schoolbook (*Histoire Générale du IVème siècle à nos jours*, published by Ernest Lavisse), as well as in two others from 1895 (A. Parmentier's *Album Historique*; and. E. Driault et G. Monod's *Histoire Générale-Première Année-Les Origines*).

In his 1893 book, Lavisse, whose works, as previously mentioned, were highly regarded by the Third Republic, devoted a few pages to the topic of cathedrals, where Gothic art is praised as a typically French art: "L'architecture que l'on appelle à tort ogivale, ou, sans raison, gothique, et que l'on devrait appeler l'architecture française – (on disait, au moyen âge, *opus francigenum*) ..."[30] There is no religious reference as to why the cathedrals were built, but only architectural and technical notes. The only references to Christ or the Virgin Mary are given through the name of some of the most famous statues. This is definitely a Republican history book focusing on facts, as well as on the pride one can draw from being French.

The same sort of ideas can be read in Parmentier's *Album Historique* for children, published in 1895. The chapter about medieval art (and indeed the whole volume) finishes on this note: "Aussi les écrivains étrangers du XIIème et du XIIIème siècles donnèrent-ils à l'art gothique le seul nom qui lui convienne, celui d'art français."[31] In the same year, E. Driault et G. Monod's published their *Histoire Générale-Première Année-Les Origines* . In their paragraph on Gothic architecture, we find the same insistance again: "Au XIIè siècle naît l'art appelé *gothique*, qu'il conviendrait mieux d'appeler français; car il s'est formé dans l'Ile-de-France et y a ses plus parfaits modèles."[32] At the end of the same section, they praise France again: "La civilisation du

moyen âge atteint au XIIIè siècle son plein épanouissement (...). C'est en France qu'elle est le plus brillante. A aucune époque, l'influence de la France, qui avait fait les croisades, avait imposé à l'Europe son enseignement, sa littérature et ses arts, n'a été aussi étendue et aussi féconde."[33]

In 1900, the very same ideas appear again in an *Histoire de France (cours élémentaire)* by Ch. Drouard et A. Mannevy, when they quote Victor Hugo, for whom the cathedral is the "oeuvre colossale d'un homme et d'un peuple, produit prodigieux de la cotisation de toutes les forces d'une époque"[34].

In 1906, after the separation of the French state and Catholic Church a year before, the book by Ad. Crémieux and J.-J. Thomas, *Le Moyen Age et le commencement des Temps modernes*, gives a particularly interesting insight into this political change: even though the authors wrote five pages about "les églises gothiques", they hardly mentioned at all the fact that they were religious monuments. They explain the architecture in detail, mention that they have "en général pour architectes des laïques", and carry on insisting on the fact that cathedrals are not really religious monuments! "La cathédrale (...) n'est plus un édifice uniquement religieux. Cette haute et vaste salle [note here the use of 'salle', a word with no religious connotation deliberately used as a neutral term] sert aux réunions et aux fêtes populaires."[35] Finally, the section on cathedrals ends on a rather patriotic note: "L'architecture gothique est française. Le foyer en fut l'Ile-de-France et le rayonnement s'en étendit non seulement à la France entière, mais encore à toute l'Europe et au delà. (...) la célèbre cathédrale de Milan en marbre fut élevée suivant la tradition du gothique français, mais c'est une oeuvre de décadence, froide et surfaite."[36] In a word, only French Gothic art is the real thing. And, by implication,

German Gothic is not. The authors complete their presentation on the cathedrals with several pictures certainly aiming at encouraging their young readers to admire the medieval architecture. Paris cathedral's exterior is represented twice, and a photograph shows the façade of Amiens cathedral in a rather imposing three-quarter viewpoint (Fig. 51). On the following double page, the children can see details of the interiors of Reims and Troyes cathedrals, as well as sculptures from the portals of Reims (Fig 52).

Crémieux and Thomas do not really mention religion, but even when other authors, like E. Driault et G. Monod in 1911, do so, the section on cathedrals concludes with a reference to the greatness of France. In *Conférences sur l'Histoire de la Civilisation*, they admit that "les piliers et les clochers, toutes les voûtes (...) sont comme des signes d'oraisons, par où monte vers Dieu les prières des fidèles. (...) Les chapelles, tout le long des basses nefs, tout autour du chevet, font cortège autour du grand autel, comme au ciel les saints et les anges autour du trône de Dieu."[37] A large drawing of Chartres cathedral accompanies this text, illustrating the idea of the cathedral being an instrument for prayers to raise heavenwards (Fig. 53). The two spires appear particularly impressive and certainly draw the eye of the viewer towards the sky. But after this, the 'patriotic' comes back: "ce sont d'ailleurs des monuments autant français que chrétiens; ces deux caractères ne peuvent se séparer au moyen âge. On a rattaché l'inspiration même de cette forme architecturale au spectacle de nos grandes forêts de chênes (...). (...) les cathédrales sont le symbole de la France chrétienne, les monuments d'une grande époque de notre civilisation."

This study of schoolbooks used in state schools is therefore confirming a number of points about the use of the image of the French cathedral in education. First they represent the greatness of France, of which the children should be proud. Second some also carry values such as democracy and freedom, through the mention of corporations and communes. Third, they tend to associate cathedrals more and more closely (and evidently do so after 1905) with a secular state whose values and art should be admired. The following two sections will show that these ideas are to be found also in other educational publications of more various forms: a reading book, *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants*, Emile Mâle's monograph on 13th century religious art in France, and dictionaries.

The Case of Le Tour de la France par deux enfants

This book was written by Mme Fouillée in 1877, who used the alias Giordano Bruno as a pseudonym. Bruno was a philosopher condemned to the pyre by order of the Catholic Church in Rome in 1600. This explains the rather non-religious stance taken by the book when the author refers to Catholic characters or monuments. The best-selling schoolbook of its time (six million copies were sold between 1877 and 1901[38]), *Le Tour de la France par deux Enfants*[39], is full of patriotic resonance, and interestingly for our study, links medieval times and Notre-Dame de Paris to patriotism. The story is that of two brothers from Alsace-Lorraine, whose parents are dead, and who decide to flee the German-occupied territory and go to France because this is what their father had in mind. Their trip is an excuse for the author to describe and praise France, its landscapes,

its people and its historical figures. Medieval times are praised especially, in the person of Jeanne d'Arc as well as in a patriotic reference to Notre-Dame de Paris, and both are presented as patriotic symbols.

In the book, the woman who tells the story of Jeanne d'Arc to the younger of the brothers concludes it with the following words: "Jeanne Darc, mon enfant, est l'une des gloires les plus pures de la patrie. Les autres nations ont eu de grands capitaines qu'elles peuvent opposer aux nôtres. Aucune nation n'a eu une héroïne qui puisse se comparer à cette humble paysanne de Lorraine, à cette noble fille du peuple de France"[40]. It is essential to note here the spelling chosen for the name of the heroine, a choice which, by removing the apostrophe, makes Jeanne a secular and popular figure rather than a Catholic one. The fact that she was from Lorraine obviously adds to her charisma. The occupation of Alsace-Lorraine by the Prussians can be easily thought of in parallel with the medieval English invasion. And of course the reader is drawn to conclude that, just like the English were finally beaten, so will the Prussians be.

Another medieval element, Notre-Dame de Paris, is introduced to the two young heroes of the book by the man accompanying the two brothers to Paris. He gives the following description of the cathedral:

-Petit Julien, vois-tu cette belle église tout ornée de dentelles découpées dans la pierre, de statues taillées avec art? Elle aussi a assisté aux premiers jours de la France. La première église de Paris fut bâtie ici il y a quinze cents ans; elle s'appelait Notre-Dame. Lorsqu'elle devint trop petite et commença à tomber en ruine, on entreprit la construction de celle-ci sur la place même où était l'ancienne Notre-Dame, et on mit un siècle à la construire. Les voûtes de Notre-Dame, depuis lors, n'ont cessé de retentir chaque fois que la France était en péril ou en fête. Leurs cloches ont sonné non seulement pour la naissance ou la mort d'un homme, mais pour les espérances et les deuils de la patrie entière.
-Oh! Dit Julien, entrons donc nous aussi à Notre-Dame, voulez-vous, mon oncle? Et nous y prierons Dieu tous les trois pour la grandeur de la France.[41]

Notre-Dame is not really seen here as a religious monument, but as a very patriotic one. The only reference to praying is that made by the boy who wants to pray for his country. The only events and festivals referred to are those linked to the 'patrie'. What is put forward is the strong link between the cathedral and the country. Notre-Dame represents France, and even more, through the ringing of its bells, associates itself to the hopes and sufferings of the French. The cathedral here feels for France, identifies with the nation, it IS French. The drawing placed with the text reinforces the idea of the greatness of this French cathedral: underneath a picture of the nave, a text reminds the reader that "c'est une des plus vastes nefs du moyen âge"[42] (Fig. 54). Moreover, the small figures seen standing in the nave give the young readers a sense of scale: they cannot but be impressed by the sheer vastness of the interior of the cathedral.

Cathedrals in Specialised Books and Dictionaries

This section looks at other kinds of books making references to cathedrals. My sample strongly suggests that various kinds of educational publications referring to cathedrals do so in very similar ways. Even dictionaries, which can be thought of as very factual and unbiased, actually leave their readers with a particular vision of Gothic art. I have selected for this section the first monograph of its kind dedicated to Gothic art, Émile Mâle's *L'Art Religieux du XIIIème siècle en France* (first published 1898), as well as three dictionaries published in 1872, 1884 and 1886.

Emile Mâle

The Middle Ages, and cathedrals in particular, have been portrayed by Mâle in several monographs, amongst which *L'Art Religieux du XIIIème siècle en France*[43], which was the very first general reference book on French Gothic art. It was published for the first time in 1898. This book is certainly more geared towards students or adults than children, but I have chosen to include it in this section because it is an educational publication dealing almost solely with cathedrals, and one which was written by a man very much respected for his historical and architectural research during the Third Republic. In the particular work I am going to analyze here, Mâle does not take any particular stance for or against the Church but tries to present facts in a rather neutral way. Like many authors of his time, as we saw earlier, he does however mention with pride that French Gothic art is the best in the world: "nulle part, la pensée chrétienne n'a été exprimée avec autant d'ampleur et de richesse qu'en France"[44]. His admiration for medieval artists and their work transpires throughout the book. He compares Chartres' portals to "symphonies[45]" and notes about a sculpture on the same cathedral that "la grande âme de saint Martin rayonne sur son visage"[46]. However, despite the fact that his book talks about religion all along, it seems that the author has put some sort of barrier between the religious beliefs of the Middle Ages and himself. He uses past tenses when referring to religious matters, as if to create a distance, and does so from the beginning of the preface: "Ces grandes figures si religieuses semblaient porter témoignage de la vérité qu'enseignait l'Eglise"[47]. This probably implies that this truth is no longer relevant to modern times. Also, he distances himself from religiosity on two occasions in

the first chapter. He firstly explains that a doctrine based on numbers probably came from Pythagoras, leaving the belief that it comes from God to Saint Augustine: "Cette doctrine venait des Pères de l'Eglise, qui la tenaient sans doute des écoles néo-platoniciennes, où revivait le génie de Pythagore. Il est évident que saint Augustin considère les nombres comme des pensées de Dieu"[48]. Further, he says "l'artiste, auraient pu dire les docteurs, doit imiter Dieu", thus showing his distance from religion by leaving this thought to churchmen. He does not want to involve himself with this sort of comment. Moreover, and despite the fact that the author assumes that his readers have some knowledge about Christianity (most current religious terms are not explained, and the writer assumes that the reader knows about the main biblical characters cited), he explains what things are when the vocabulary becomes less evident. This is the case for instance when he talks about the priest's clothing: "La chasuble, qui se met par-dessus tous les autres vêtements (...). L'étole, que le prêtre se passe autour du cou (...)"[49].

On the whole, it seems therefore that Mâle did not want to write an art historical book from a religious point of view. A religious author's faith would have no doubt been visible in his writing on religious art. Here, Mâle gives a rather neutral account of the imagery present in cathedrals, whilst showing that he is free to sometimes give his opinion, and also to remain rather nationalistic about the beauty and grandeur of the French monuments.

Dictionaries

As reference books used both by schoolchildren in their classrooms and adults, one may assume that dictionaries would be rather unbiased in their descriptions of cathedrals. A sample of dictionaries from the end of the 19th century proves that this is not always the case, and that the greatness of the country was also celebrated in these books.

In 1872, the *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle* published by Pierre Larousse (the first volume was published in 1863) was not yet presenting Gothic art as a French speciality, like the two other dictionaries I analyse below. In the *Larousse*, "gothique" "se dit d'un style d'architecture caractérisé surtout par la forme ogivale des voûtes et des arceaux, et qui succéda au style roman."[50] There was no reference yet to the Frenchness or the greatness of this art form.

In 1884, a completely different definition was given by Larive and Fleury in their *Dictionnaire Français illustré des Mots et des Choses*. This time pride took a great place in the definition:

> *L'architecture gothique*, notre architecture nationale du moyen âge, qui succéda à l'architecture romane et régna, dans toute l'Europe occidentale, en passant par de nombreuses transformations, depuis le milieu du XIIe siècle jusqu'à la Renaissance. Elle est caractérisée par l'emploi exclusif de l'ogive, et, comme les Goths sont tout à fait étrangers à son éclosion, on devrait l'appeler toujours l'*architecture ogivale*. (...) On sait que cette architecture a doté la France de chefs-d'oeuvre dans lesquels, par une aberration inconcevable du goût, les esprits les plus éclairés du XVIIe siècle et du XVIIIe, ne voyaient que des monuments barbares.[51]

Not only does this definition rehabilitate Gothic art and underline how it gave France some beautiful monuments, it also makes it very clear that the Goths, and so by implication the Germans, have nothing to do with it, and that the beauty of this

architecture is to the credit of the French people. This text can therefore be seen as anti-German.

In 1886, another dictionary takes a very similar stance. The *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des Sciences-Dictionnaire encyclopédique des Lettres et des Arts* says about Gothic architecture: "Le style ogival est éminemment français"[52]. There is therefore no doubt that both schoolbooks and dictionaries developed the same ideas about cathedrals and Gothic art: it is French and its greatness is a source of pride.

I have certainly demonstrated now how important it seems to the authors of schoolbooks and dictionaries to praise the medieval France that built such wonders as the cathedrals. The cathedrals were, for the authors of the various kinds of books studied here, a way to transmit to the younger generations a feeling of pride and therefore patriotism.

However, if most schoolchildren attended state schools, religious private schools were still very much alive. These schools used different books from the ones in state schools. We therefore need to see how these Catholic books present the French cathedrals. The next section will explain the context surrounding Catholic schools in France between 1870 and 1914 before reviewing the way in which Catholic schoolbooks presented the French cathedrals to a Catholic audience.

The Position of the Church

According to Yves Gaulupeau of the Musée National de l'Éducation, "pendant la majeure partie de la Troisième République, (...) il est clair que les écoles catholiques ont, pour leur part, hautement et durablement revendiqué le rôle de sanctuaire des valeurs conjointes de l'Église et de la Patrie. De cette double dévotion, les histoires de France écrites à l'intention des élèves des écoles confessionnelles témoignent éloquemment, par le texte comme par l'image".[53] We will see below how these two themes of Church and Motherland can be found in the representation of cathedrals conveyed by Catholic schoolbooks. But in order to understand the motivations of the Catholic Church lying behind these representations, the following section will delve briefly into the history and contexts surrounding the Catholic Church in France between 1870 and 1914.

As soon as the Lois Ferry on secularity in schools were promulgated, the Catholic Church understood the threat on its power to educate children into Christians. In a Catholic periodical like *l'Univers*, the hardliners of Catholicism and tradition showed in 1882 how they considered the transformation of schools into secular institutions and underlined their determination to fight for their beliefs:

> Dans l'école laïque, le crucifix et l'image de la Sainte Vierge ont été enlevés, les pieuses sentences, les préceptes de la morale chrétienne inscrits sur les murs ont été effacés. Le maître a commencé sa classe sans invoquer le nom de Dieu que les païens eux-mêmes priaient, et si quelque écolier a fait, par habitude, le signe de la croix, il a été repris aussitôt, et peut-être puni comme d'une faute. (...)
> Aux catholiques de se liguer et d'agir pour qu'il ne produise pas tout le mal qui doit en résulter. C'est notre dernière ressource, jusqu'à ce que le mépris, ou le bon sens, ou la force des choses, ou le châtiment divin, nous délivre de la République.[54]

The Lois Ferry did not however outlaw religious schools, and they were allowed to carry on with their teaching. They were also allowed to choose their schoolbooks, as long as they were in conformity with the Constitution and the laws. But the controversy about their very existence continued, and leading figures, as well as some publications, made their opinions about the Church heard. For instance, Ferdinand Buisson, director of the "enseignement primaire" between 1879 and 1896 wondered "et le droit de l'enfant, qu'en fait-on? Ce qu'on nous demande, sous couleur de liberté, c'est, proprement, la liberté d'accaparement des consciences. Or la liberté reconnaît toutes les libertés, sauf celle de l'asservissement volontaire."[55] The Catholic Church was considered a threat, an organization which was going to take children away from the Republic and turn them into the slaves of a particular religious belief. *La Nouvelle Revue*, a Republican journal of education, was pleased to see in the new school guidelines the likely fading of the Church's obscurantism and influence on young people: "Quelle prise aura l'Eglise sur des intelligences rompues, dès leur jeune âge, aux habitudes scientifiques? Quel scrupule, quel respect humain pourra les arrêter dans la recherche impitoyable de la vérité? Quelle crainte les fera reculer devant la solution des problèmes qui se posent à notre démocratie?"[56]

The Church noticed how secular teaching was introduced step by step into state schools, and constantly tried to make its supporters aware of the situation. In 1882, *L'Univers* defended religious schools because they were the only ones to take into account the soul of the children: "A cette armée de caporaux instructeurs et d'acrobates parfaits formés par les soins de la commission d'éducation militaire, eût-elle dans ses bagages le portrait de M. Gambetta, il manquerait ce que Paul Bert [minister of the

Instruction Publique in 1881-1882] a omis de mentionner et ce dont il ne daigne pas s'occuper: une âme."[57] In 1886, *Le Bulletin de la Société générale d'Education et d'Enseignement* (the Catholic equivalent of the secular Ligue de l'Enseignement) raises the alarm again: "L'instituteur ou l'institutrice ne prononcent guère le nom de Dieu (...). (...) on ne perd jamais de vue son esprit [l'esprit de la loi], qui est la déchristianisation de la France..."[58]

A major step against the Church was taken by the "Loi du 7 juillet 1904", which forbade members of religious congregations from teaching. But this would be the last law towards compulsory secularization in schools. It was understood that there was no further need to persecute an institution that was probably going to disappear anyway.

But the Catholic schools remained alive and its teachers and manuals faithful to the teachings of the Church. A whole network of religious schools managed to survive, particularly in regions where Catholicism was still very much alive. The number of children taught in these schools, even though it fell sharply after the Lois Ferry, remained important, totaling more than 1.65 million children in 1891 (compared to about 4.1 million children in secular schools)[59].

Thus the Catholic Church remained a strong influence in French society, and I want to prove that Catholic schoolbooks were as interested as the state schoolbooks in making the children proud of their countries and ready to defend it, should the need to do so arise. The bishop of Autun spoke on the subject of *revanche* in 1882 in *Le Monde*: "Il y a des circonstances dans lesquelles la neutralité est un crime de haute trahison! On ne peut pas, on ne doit pas demeurer neutre entre son pays et les ennemis de son pays

(…)"[60]. From 1904 onwards, which is the date from which the state started to associate patriotism with the right and therefore with the Catholics, the latter seized the opportunity to express their disdain towards what they saw as a fatal weakness. *La Vérité française*, a right-wing paper, published in 1905 this dark prophecy: "Elle sera belle, cette République de l'avenir issue de l'école laïque […]. On la voit venir avec le drapeau rouge, qui se dresse partout, (…) avec l'Allemand par derrière, qui se réserve de montrer, pour finir, ce qu'on fait d'un pays où il n'y a plus ni religion ni patrie (…)."[61] So the Catholic Church, or at least part of its community, felt it had become their role to instill the values of pride and love for the motherland into children.

Catholic Schoolbooks and Magazines: a Religious Cathedral

The following selection of Catholic schoolbooks from the Third Republic I researched will show how they differ from the secular school manuals and how they also share the same themes when it comes to the pride for the motherland.

In 1897, the "Frères des écoles chrétiennes" published an *Histoire de France* for their schools. The cover of the book itself is of interest to this study: it represents the statue of Jeanne d'Arc by Paul Dubois on her horse, brandishing her sword whilst looking upwards to heaven (Fig. 55). This statue was presented at the Salon of 1889, then in bronze at the Salon of 1895. It was put up in front of Reims cathedral in 1896, and another one was erected in Paris in front of the Saint-Augustin Church in 1900[62]. This choice of imagery is of course the bearer of a double message: Jeanne d'Arc is the saviour of France, but also, and very importantly in the context of a religious education,

a saint. It also already proves the great interest Catholic schoolbooks showed for the Middle Ages: as Gaulupeau notes, "le récit des temps médiévaux et modernes [est] propice à la nostalgie de la monarchie catholique"[63]. Inside this particular book, a section is entitled "les écoles et les cathédrales au XIIIe siècle". Like the state schoolbooks, it deals with the university of Paris, but insists on the fact that it was "fondée par les papes et protégée par les rois de France"[64]. It then carries on explaining that, in numerous towns and villages "les curés tenaient des écoles gratuites pour les enfants du peuple"[65], information which the state schoolbooks did not mention. The cathedrals are also presented in a religious manner. They are "les plus beaux monuments de la piété de nos pères" and "la maison de Dieu", and during the construction it happened that "on travaillait en chantant des cantiques"[66]. But these religious notes, typical to this sort of books, are also entwined with a notion of solidarity, equality and brotherhood, which was present in the state schoolbooks: "tout le monde contribuait à les élever: les riches donnaient leur or, les pauvres leur travail". Furthermore, the idea of the grandeur of France is also present in this Christian book. Paris university is "la première école du monde"[67], whilst "les magnifiques cathédrales (...) font encore aujourd'hui l'admiration des artistes."[68]

Another Catholic schoolbook, *Histoire de France*, written by an anonymous "F.F." approved by a number of religious figures and published in 1899 by Mame, a Catholic publisher, showed the same themes of religiosity and pride for France. It explained for instance that the Sainte-Chapelle was built to receive "la Couronne d'épines de Notre-Seigneur"[69], and that "l'architecture ogivale" can also be called "française"[70]. A small

illustration representing Amiens cathedral describes it as an example of "architecture ogivale"[71], not Gothic.

But a particularly interesting example dates from a few years earlier. J. de Crozals' *Lectures historiques-Moyen age (classe de troisième)*, published in 1891, shows an admiration for the greatness of France through its cathedrals, and presents medieval history from a Catholic viewpoint. The title of the paragraph devoted to Gothic art calls it "l'art ogival" and refers to France as its "patrie"[72]. The author starts his explanation in what can only be called a nationalistic manner: "On fait d'ordinaire à l'Ile-de-France, ou à une région circonvoisine, l'honneur d'avoir fourni les premiers spécimens de l'art gothique. L'Allemagne et l'Espagne ont dû renoncer à leurs prétentions."[73] The following paragraph wants to make the reader even more aware of the amazing greatness of these monuments through the vocabulary used by the author: "la cathédrale gothique saisit l'imagination par l'élan immense de son jet vers le ciel"[74], "on est comme enlevé par cette sensation"[75], "le merveilleux, sans doute, c'est ce colosse de Pierre lui-même, debout par l'invisible force qui unit ces milliers de blocs (...)"[76]. In another section, he describes the festivals: "qu'on se représente l'effet des lumières sur ces prodigieux monuments, (...) lorsque la lumière et la voix tournaient de cercle en cercle, et qu'en bas, dans l'ombre, répondait l'océan du peuple. C'était là pour ce temps le vrai drame, le vrai mystère (...)"[77]. The words chosen are very strong, and try to create a powerful effect on the reader. The author wants the young learners to realize how magnificent the cathedrals must have been at the time.

The book is no doubt Catholic, as many remarks in this section about the cathedrals prove: "Le moyen âge écrivit avec ces "pierres vives" [the cathedrals] le poème de sa

foi"; the building of a cathedral is considered by the author an "acte de foi"; and religion was an important part of the life of the medieval man, as their church was "le centre même autour duquel il se mouvait", "l'église était alors le domicile du peuple", and "il n'y avait qu'une maison à vrai dire, la maison de Dieu."[78] The author also decribes the gathering of the people inside the cathedrals: "le peuple élevait la voix, le vrai peuple venu du dehors, lorsqu'il entrait innombrable, tumultueux, par tous les vomitoires de la cathédrale, avec sa grande voix confuse; géant enfant, comme le saint Christophe de la légende, brut, ignorant, passionné, mais docile, demandant à porter le Christ sur ses épaules colossales."[79] We are here in front of an impressive image of Christians gathered inside their cathedrals, a people who are of course the ancestors of the ones reading this history book.

But aside from the greatness of the Gothic cathedrals and their Catholic side, de Crozals also opened the idea that cathedrals were not only religious buildings, but stressed the importance of the fact that they were constructed by a secular workforce: they are "oeuvres d'architectes laïques organisés en corporations"[80]. He acknowledges the importance of faith in the building of the cathedrals, but adds that "il y avait dans l'érection d'une cathédrale, en même temps qu'un acte de foi, la manifestation d'un instinct très juste d'unité et de constitution civile"[81] because the church was at the center of people's lives. "L'église était alors le domicile du peuple"[82]. It seems that the cathedral appears here as a foundation of the French people, a part of their identity. It is even linked to democracy: the corporations were already mentioned by Lavisse, and de Crozals continues on the same note, evoking the meetings of the *communes* inside the cathedral ("La commune y délibérait"[83]). Started for economic reasons, the *communes*

were associations of *bourgeois* from the same city whose aim was to maintain order within their city. Because these *bourgeois* were wealthy, the local lords and the king saw advantages in having them on their side, and gave them economic and sometimes political advantages in order to keep their allegiance. In exchange for these privileges, the *commune* had to perform a number of tasks, such as building city walls, and provide the king with men for his militia[84]. The development of the *communes* certainly was very important in the eyes of republicans, and seen amongst other things as the beginning of the political awareness of the lower classes. A book on the *communes* by Achille Luchaire, first published in 1890, gives an insight into the resonance these medieval institutions had at the end of the 19th century. Luchaire noted in his preface to the book that the *communes* became numerous enough in the XIIth century "pour forcer l'attention des classes privilégiées et leur apprendre que la couche inférieure de la société (...) demande sa place au soleil, ose même aspirer à l'existence politique."[85] Another positive aspect of the *communes* was that they were born out of the "besoin qu'avaient les habitants des villes de substituer l'exploitation limitée et réglée à l'exploitation arbitraire dont ils étaient victimes."[86] In other words, the *communes* were born out of a will for freedom, and certainly provided a freer lifestyle to their members. These two themes, social awareness and freedom, are republican in essence, and it is therefore surprising to find schoolbooks used in Catholic schools referring to the *communes*. However, and we will have the opportunity to come back to this theme in the following chapter, the *Ralliement* of the 1890s has to be taken into account if one is to understand de Crozal's book. Under the influence of Pope Leo XIII, the French Catholics were encouraged to accept republican institutions. Therefore a schoolbook

such as this, mixing the qualities of Catholicism and the advantages of democracy, may be seen as a step towards the *Ralliement*. Associating the *communes* and the great cathedrals lead the children to connect these buildings with the birth of French democracy.

To conclude on this particular book, we are here faced with multiple political and religious perspectives. First, the cathedrals are presented in a patriotic way insisting on the greatness of these French monuments. Second, the author insists on the importance of Catholicism in medieval times. Third, he shows how deeply rooted the Catholic monuments were in the life of the city, and the role they played in the development of the French as a democratic people.

Le Jeune âge illustré, a Catholic periodical for children, reinforces this idea that the greatness of France and religion are linked. Amidst moral stories, Christian poetry, games, traditional songs and hymns, an 1881 article is entitled "découvertes de quatre jeunes Français en France" and focuses on Nantes, with its Place Louis XVI and its cathedral. It appears that this magazine takes a rather conservative stance. After viewing "la place qui porte le nom de l'infortuné Louis XVI", the four boys of the story and their father make their way to the cathedral. It is interesting to notice that the drawing accompanying the article shows the cathedral from the Place Louis XVI, as if to put the emphasis on the latter (Fig. 56). A column supporting a statue of the king (a very rare occurrence; there are only three of them in France) draped in a robe is the central motif of the illustration, while the mass of the cathedral, detaching itself from an empty sky in the background, is the second most prominent feature. Almost an entire page of the

magazine is dedicated to the boys' visit to the cathedral, and abounds in proud references to its architecture: "Mon père nous fit remarquer la majestueuse proportion des tours et des voûtes"[87], "on ne se lasse pas d'admirer ces merveilleuses statues"[88], "seul, un artiste de génie, pouvait les concevoir et les exécuter sans que sa main trahît sa pensée"[89]. During the visit to the cathedral, another conservative reference appears: the group admire a sculpted tomb, built by Anne de Bretagne for her father, the duke François II de Bretagne. Amidst these proud and conservative notes, the theme of morale and religion is present too. Reference is made to two sculptures representing courage and fidelity, and then to two others representing "la Justice, la Force, la Prudence et la Sagesse"[90]. The capitalized first letters prove how significant these qualities should appear to the young reader. Certain figures are then mentioned when the group happens to see their statues: saint François, sainte Marguerite, saint Louis and Charlemagne. This mix of saints, of a French king who fought in the Crusades and of an emperor, altogether represent a strong, religious France. Religion mixed with conservatism appears again when the boys come out of the monument: "nous sortons recueillis de la cathédrale; les souvenirs évoqués nous occupent." These memories are of course that of a strong, Catholic French monarchy. In one page, the article has created a positive image of the old France that children should be longing for, a recurrent theme in Catholic schoolbooks praising medieval times. These were times when kings reigned over a strong nation and fought for their religion, times when great monuments such a cathedrals were built; the children of the story reflect upon these with the implied hope that they will come back one day.

Thanks to this analysis of Catholic schoolbooks and a Catholic magazine for children, this section has demonstrated how important it was for the Catholic Church to spread its teaching to the young generation partly thanks to an imagery and texts involving the medieval cathedrals and prominent Catholic figures. The Church naturally taught about Catholicism, but also about the greatness of France, and in this respect its aims appear to be similar to those of the Republic.

This chapter devoted to the way cathedrals were presented in schoolbooks and in various educational publications showed us how a monument could embody many feelings, some seemingly contradictory. The Republican cathedral celebrated the greatness of France during the Middle Ages and presented medieval times as democratic and educated, with an emphasis on the corporations, the communes and the Sorbonne. The cathedral appeared as a monument made by the people for the people. The cathedral of religious schoolbooks, on the other hand, was very much a Catholic, conservative building. It was shown as the house of God, and was linked to the great monarchic times. However, the theme of pride and greatness was very much present in these Catholic books too. It appears that the defeat against Prussia and the subsequent desire for revenge acted as a uniting event as far as the nation's feelings for its country was concerned. In a France divided between "les deux écoles", all children were taught to be proud of their country, and references to the great cathedrals were a way to do so. The remark Marcel Pagnol made in 1957 in *La Gloire de mon père*, the story of a school teacher and his family, seems to apply to our case: "tous les manuels d'histoire du

monde n'ont jamais été que des livrets de propagande au service des gouvernements."[91]

The way cathedrals were presented in textbooks for children between the Franco-Prussian conflict and the First World War is a very good example of how governmental measures can influence educational material towards a particular aim.

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[1] PARMENTIER, A, 1895, p.230.
[2] BRUNO, G., 1882, pp. 284-285.
[3] A library specialised in children's literature, rue des Prêtres Saint Séverin, Paris.
[4] 29 rue d'Ulm, Paris.
[5] BRUNO, G., 1882.
[6] ALBERTINI, P., 1992, 1998, p. 75.
[7] Founded by Jean Macé (1815-1894), who taught in the Haut-Rhin before its annexion to Germany, and came back to France afterwards.
[8] GAILLARD, J.-M., 2000, p.173.
[9] Ibid., p.35.
[10] Cited in ALBERTINI, P., 1992, 1998, p.69.
[11] GAILLARD, J.-M., 2000, p.134.
[12] In more and more schools, boys were taught military exercises, and provided with military equipment. In 1881, the Paris town council gave 250 000 francs towards the development of this innovation in schools. (source: OZOUF, M., 1982, p.115)
[13] *Le Bulletin de la Ligue française de l'Enseignement*, 1er août 1882, cited in OZOUF, M., 1982, p.115.
[14] *L'Ecole*, 24 février 1884, cited by OZOUF, M., 1982, p.113.
[15] JAURÈS, J., *Lettre aux Instituteurs*, 1888
[16] OZOUF, M., 1982, p.195.
[17] Cited in ALBERTINI, P., 1992, 1998, p.70.
[18] Cited in ALBERTINI, P., 1992, 1998, p.75.
[19] CONS, L., Librairie Ch. Delagrave, Paris, 1880. The Delagrave publishing company was created in 1865 and initially only published primary school books for state schools.
[20] Ibid., pp.61-63
[21] According to J. Ehrard, quoted in LELIÈVRE, C. and NIQUE, C., 1994, p.321.
[22] Written in collaboration with Paul Dupuy, Paris, 1890.
[23] LAVISSE, E., 1890, p.128.
[24] Ibid., pp. 128-129.
[25] SCHAEFFNER, C., 1968, p. 167.
[26] LELIÈVRE, C. and NIQUE, C., 1994, p.322.
[27] NORA, P., *Les Lieux de Mémoire*, Vol.II, quoted in LELIÈVRE, C. and NIQUE, C., Paris, 1994, p.322.
[28] NORA, P., 1997, p.161.
[29] LAVISSE, E., *Questions d'enseignement national*, Paris, Colin, 1885, pp. 208-210, quoted in ALBERTINI, P., 1992, 1998, p. 84.
[30] LAVISSE, E., 1893, p.582.
[31] PARMENTIER, A, 1895, p.230.
[32] DRIAULT, E. and MONOD, G., 1895, pp. 391-392.
[33] Ibid., p. 392.
[34] DROUARD, Ch. and MANNEVY, A., 1900, p. 61.
[35] CREMIEUX, A. and THOMAS, J.-J, 1906, p. 282.
[36] Ibid., pp. 282-283.
[37] DRIAULT, E., and MONOD, G., 1911, pp. 285-286.

[38] Figures given by ALBERTINI, P., 1992, 1998, p.83.
[39] Edition referred to here: BRUNO, G., *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants-Devoir et Patrie*, Librairie classique Eugène Belin, Paris, 1882 (326è edition, texte primitif).
[40] BRUNO, G., 1882, p.52.
[41] Ibid., pp. 284-285.
[42] Ibid., p. 284.
[43] MÂLE, E., 1931 (7ème édition). First edition 1898.
[44] Ibid., Préface, p.iv.
[45] Ibid., p.21.
[46] Ibid., p.3.
[47] Ibid., Préface, p.i.
[48] Ibid., p.9.
[49] Ibid., p.19.
[50] LAROUSSE, P., 1872, p.1382.
[51] LARIVE and FLEURY, 1884, Tome Premier, p.852.
[52] *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des Sciences-Dictionnaire encyclopédique des Lettres et des Arts-Deuxiéme Partie Lettres et Arts*, 1886.
[53] GAULUPEAU, Y, in CHOLVY, G. and CHALINE, N.-J., 1995, p. 73.
[54] *L'Univers*, 2 octobre 1882, cited in ALBERTINI, P., 1992, 1998, p.70.
L'Univers, whose motto was "Catholiques avant tout", was opposed to the liberal tendencies of Catholicism.
[55] Cited in ALBERTINI, P., 1992, 1998, p.68.
[56] *La Nouvelle Revue*, novembre 1882, cited in OZOUF, M., 1982, p.104.
[57] *L'Univers*, 27 janvier 1882, cited in OZOUF, M., 1982, p.116.
[58] *Le Bulletin de la Société générale d'Education et d'Enseignement*, septembre 1886, cited in OZOUF, M., 1982, p.107.
[59] PROST, A., 1968, p. 218.
[60] *Le Monde*, 28 mai 1882, cited in OZOUF, M., 1982, p.117.
[61] *La Vérité française*, 21 juillet 1905, cited in OZOUF, M., 1982, p.202.
[62] FUSCO, P. and JANSON, H.W., 1980, pp. 245-246.
[63] GAULUPEAU, Y, in CHOLVY, G. and CHALINE, N.-J., 1995, p. 73.
[64] *Histoire de France par les Frères des école chrétiennes*, 1897, p.78.
[65] Ibid., p.79.
[66] Ibid., p.79.
[67] Ibid., p.78.
[68] Ibid., p.79.
[69] F.F., 1899, p.131.
[70] Ibid., p.130.
[71] Ibid., p. 131.
[72] De Crozals, 1891, p. 542.
[73] Ibid., p. 542.
[74] Ibid., p.542.
[75] Ibid., p.542.
[76] Ibid., p.543.
[77] Ibid., p. 547.
[78] Ibid., pp. 544-545
[79] Ibid., p. 545.
[80] Ibid., p. 542.
[81] Ibid., p.544.
[82] Ibid., p.545.
[83] Ibid., p. 545.

[84] SCHAEFFNER, C., *Les Etats du Moyen-âge-La Civilisation médiévale*, Paris, Bruxelles, Montreal, 1968, pp. 160-162.
[85] LUCHAIRE, A., 1911, p. 3.
[86] Ibid., p. 14.
[87] *LeJeune âge illustré*, samedi 19 novembre 1881, p.558.
[88] Ibid., p.559.
[89] Ibid., p.559.
[90] Ibid., p.559.
[91] Cited in AMALVI, C., 1995, p.71.

Chapter Three
The Religious and Spiritual Cathedral within the Catholic Church and the State

Elle [la cathédrale de Saintes] restera pour tous les Saintongeais,
pour les habitants de la ville de Saintes en particulier,
héritiers de la foi et de la charité antiques,
l'église mère de la contrée,
le temple qu'ils aiment à voir magnifiquement orné,
et peuplé d'un nombreux clergé,
le lieu où ont prié et où reposent leurs pères.
AUDIAT, L., *Saint-Pierre de Saintes, Cathédrale et insigne basilique*, 1871, pp. 78-80.

Chapters One and Two gave us the opportunity to look at French cathedrals within the context of the civil republican state, and in particular their associations with nationalism. The following section will explore the relation between cathedrals, Catholicism and the republican state. An intrinsic Catholic building, constructed for the glory of God and the worship of the people, the cathedral became at the end of the 19th century a problematic motif because of its very nature. In a state becoming less and less religious, at a time when science was progressing rapidly, the cathedral and the beliefs associated with it were in opposition to the republican state promoting a secular vision of the future. But a large part of the French population was Catholic (or at least baptized even if they did not practice their religion); religious practice varied enormously from region to region, and the cathedrals were places of worship where many services were held (Fig. 57). However, the toughening anti-clericalism of the Third Republic over the years meant that the conflict between the Catholic Church and the republican state worsened. Cathedrals were not exempt from this conflict and suffered from the *Loi de Séparation* in 1905 and the subsequent *inventaires* of the goods owned by the Church.

This chapter will suggest how visual representations of cathedrals could be made to contradict the secular atmosphere promoted by the state. The cathedral, an essentially Catholic monument, became an instrument of opposition in the hands of Catholic artists.

In order to explain how this developed, I will firstly explain the progress of state anti-clericalism during the third Republic and how this was received by Catholics, before delving into Catholic texts and documents presenting cathedrals. Once this broader picture has been established, analysis of a number of Catholic paintings representing French cathedrals in a religious context will be possible, in order to question the sort of message the artists may want to convey, whether they represented saints or common people in connection with cathedrals. Finally, it will be of particular interest to examine a number of illustrations and paintings documenting the use of cathedrals for the Catholic funerals of great men of the Republic. This paradoxical situation will show again, as Chapters One and Two did, how the secular state was able to use a religious building in a republican manner, this time within a Catholic celebration.

This chapter will use a particularly broad range of visual and written documents on cathedrals, from a 1908 film, to drawings and extracts from 19th-century magazines, to Salon paintings, sculptures, postcards and 19th-century guidebooks. This range will allow us to provide a broad perspective on the connection between cathedrals and Catholicism.

The Church and the Third Republic in Conflict

A summary of the main historical events leading to the separation of the French state from the Church will help understand the engagement of Catholic artists against the anticlerical state. It will also provide an insight into the complexity of the relations between the republican state and the Catholic Church.

After the Republic was proclaimed on 4 September 1870, the first government was composed almost exclusively of anti-clericals and free-masons. But because this government wanted first and foremost to devote themselves to the defence of the national territory, they avoided taking any drastic steps against the Church. However, in the main Republican towns, secularisation started to find its way. In Paris the mayor of the 11th *arrondissement*, Mottu, expelled the monks and nuns working as teachers and forbade the teaching of catechism in primary schools. In Lyon, a *Comité de Salut Public* took charge of the administration and, amongst other measures, forbade religious processions in the streets and confiscated the clergy's possessions[1], prefiguring what the Commune was about to do in a more violent and systematic manner.

On 2 April 1871, the new Commune of Paris ordered the separation of Church and State and the nationalization of all the goods and buildings owned by the clergy[2]. In order to respond to the arrests made by the Thiers government (based in Versailles) of Commune supporters, the *Communards* arrested a number of Catholic priests, as well as the archbishop of Paris, Mgr Darboy. They were executed when Thiers's government troops entered Paris. Importantly, it was also reported that the Communards attempted to

burn Notre-Dame down, and some accounts suggested that a pile of chairs was indeed set on fire inside (as described on pp. 53-54), but that the cathedral eventually survived the events almost unscathed.

After the Commune was crushed, the clergy invited the faithful to join large demonstrations of faith and expiation for the sins which had been committed and to put an end to public apostasy. This led to a renewal of the popularity of pilgrimages, at Paray-le-Monial, La Salette, and Lourdes. John McManners notes that "the 1870s and 1880 were the great decades of mass pilgrimages"[3]. The pilgrimage idea was supported from 1872 by the publication of *Le Pélerin*, a magazine published by the Assomptionnistes, a religious order which also organised pilgrimages, with the help of the rapidly extending railway network. Even the Assemblée Nationale took part in this religious renaissance. In May 1873, around 100 *députés* headed a 30,000 strong crowd of pilgrims at Paray-le-Monial. In their name, the baron de Belcastel pronounced the "voeu de la France", an unofficial consecration of the country to the Sacred Heart[4]. In the same year, the Abbé Mathevon wrote about the renaissance of pilgrimages to the Virgin Mary in France:

> Après les récents désastres de la Patrie, au milieu des ruines matérielles et morales du plus grand de tous les peuples, (...) des multitudes de Français se précipitent, non pas sur les armes réclamées par la revanche, non pas sur les outils capables de réédifier les monuments à terre, non pas vers l'étude d'où jaillit la lumière; mais, avec un entrain enthousiaste, vers un certain nombre de sanctuaires dédiés à la Vierge Marie.[5]

The same author insists on the importance of these pilgrimages, linking them to the moral restoration of the country[6]. Slightly later, the building of the Sacré-Coeur basilica in Paris was decided, and built thanks to a national subscription between 1876 and 1910.

Inside, the dedication of a wounded and faithful France to the Sacred Heart was inscribed around the choir in the following words: *Gallia poenitens et devota* (France repentant and consecrated). This general devotion went together with a Catholic hope that a monarchic restoration would be possible. However, the Comte de Chambord, even though supported by the vast majority of Catholics, wasted his chances when he insisted in February 1873 on a return of the white flag of pre-revolutionary France.

As far as laws were concerned, the Church gained some ground in the early 1870s. The law stipulated that the clergy should take part in the administrative commissions in charge of public charity. In the army, it was stated that chaplaincies should be created for all the various cults. On an educational level, the Catholics succeeded in having an almost complete freedom as far as higher education was concerned. They were free to open universities and free to use whichever methods they wished. To obtain their diplomas, students were free to choose between a jury composed of state academics only or one including Catholic university professors too.

At the end of 1875, the president Maréchal de Mac-Mahon and the Sénat were monarchists, while the Assemblée Nationale had a Republican majority. However, after members of the clergy got involved in 1877 in the conflict opposing the Pope and the Italian government, the president dissolved the Assemblée. New elections resulted in October 1877 in the defeat of the monarchists. Eventually, when Mac-Mahon resigned in January 1879, the Republicans were in charge of both assemblies and the presidency.

Catholics and the Republican Government

It is important here to remind ourselves of the link which connects the French State and the Church. Since the engagement taken by the Concordat under Napoleon in 1801, the government had to partly support the Church financially, and provide the clergy's salaries. In 1875 the budget devoted to the Church was nearly 54 million francs, on a total budget of 2,5 billion, showing that it was by no means an insignificant part of it[7]. Also regular diplomatic relations existed between France and the Vatican, through the presence of an ambassador in Rome and that of a nuncio in Paris.

In order to understand the reasons why the Church was the victim of Republican attacks, it is important to look into how important the place of the Church was in France around 1880. In 1876, 55,369 people formed the secular clergy, whilst there were over 127,000 nuns in 1875[8], and the number of members of male congregations was over 30,000. Because of the education they received, which tended to focus on theoretical issues rather than contemporary ones, the secular clergy are said to "traite[r] avec un autoritarisme simpliste qui n'est plus de mise" the people they look after[9]. Most priests came from modest families and lived in relative poverty. This contrasted with the apparent wealth of the various religious orders. In 1880, the radical *député* Henri Brisson gave the parliament the results of an inquest into the wealth of religious orders, which showed that the estimated value of the 6,937 existing orders was between six and seven million francs. When presenting these facts, the *député* underlined the danger of "cette mainmorte religieuse qui soustrait aux familles et aux échanges libres une part croissante du patrimoine national."[10] A year later Gambetta used the same theme at a speech in

Menilmontant, talking about the wealth of the clergy, acquired in more or less legitimate ways, and which evades tax, "qui est un scandale dans ce pays des Gaules, composé de paysans et de propriétaires"[11]. But even more than its wealth, it was the place the Church had conquered in secondary education that the Republicans were unhappy about. The total number of pupils attending Catholic *collèges* and *petits séminaires* (about 50,000 for the first and 23,000 for the latter) was almost the same as those going to state secondary schools. Also, the Jesuits had opened several *cours préparatoires*, preparing students for the French *Grandes Ecoles*. In 1878-9, more than a third of the future civil servants and officers entering national schools like the Ecole Polytechnique or Saint-Cyr had received a Catholic education[12]. Let us also add that state schools had chaplains in charge of religious education. As far as primary education was concerned, the place of the Church was very important too. In 1876-77, 2,648,562 pupils attended a state primary school while 2,068,373 went to a Catholic one[13]. But even though the balance seemed to be in favour of the state here, in reality it was not the case: on a total number of primary schools (Catholic and state) of 71,547 in 1876-77, 69,000 were in effect Catholic, placed under the inspection or direction of the Church. This meant that subjects like catechism and church history were essential and that all classes would be preceded and finished with a prayer, under the crucifix placed above the teacher's rostrum.

Another Catholic stronghold took the form of a large number of charitable organisations, particularly in urban parishes. The *patronages* appeared, involving children's holiday camps and various social actions towards the poor, the blind or the deaf and mute. The message of the Catholic Church was related in papers such as the

national daily *La Croix* (founded in 1883), and in the smaller *Croix* published locally.[14] However, even though the Church's strength could be seen in education and charities, its decline had started in other domains. The number of vocations started to go down. The Catholic *Cercles ouvriers* founded by Comte Albert de Mun in 1871 recruited 50,000 members over ten years, but even though this number may appear high, it is much less impressive if compared with the total number of blue-collar workers in France (in 1891 around 4,500,000 people worked within the industrial sector[15]) and was in fact about the same as any large Catholic charitable organisation. And in parallel with, and certainly in connection with, the beginning of this disaffection for the Church, a *libre-pensée* current developed. The Freemasons for instance saw an increase in their numbers linked to the rise of the Republicans. The *sociétés de Libre-Pensée* were other vectors of anticlericalism. Several publications spread these ideas, amongst which *Le Siècle*, *La Presse*, *Les Débats*, or *L'Opinion Nationale*, which started publishing at the end of the Second Empire[16].

So, the 1869 and 1876 Republican programmes inscribed themselves in this general context of a Church which was still generally very strong, but starting to lose its appeal and be under the attack of an increasing number of anti-clerical individuals, associations and media. But even though official statistics of the 1870s record 35 million French as being Catholics (against 600,000 Protestants, 50,000 Jews and 80,000 free-thinkers), McManners insists that many of these Catholics "accepted no obligation beyond making their Easter communion, many merely attended mass occasionally, or came to church to be married or were brought there to be buried, many were nominal

Catholics whose allegiance did not extend beyond the census forms"[17]. In order to combat the power of the Church (both in the aspect of its wealth and that of its power over minds), the Republicans voted a number of laws which removed from the church organisations their powerful means of action. In 1880, a law suppressed the compulsory Sunday rest. In 1881, the denominational character of cemeteries was abolished. In 1882 primary public education became non-religious. In 1884 divorce was allowed, public prayers were banned and a number of municipal laws allowed mayors to take action to regulate such things as bell ringing in churches. In 1886 the state schools' staff were secularised; and in 1887 the law made it an obligation to respect a deceased person's wishes for his/her funeral.

The elections of 1885 saw the political groups in the Chamber divided into three main blocks of roughly the same size[18]. This led to a reduction in the anti-clericalism of the government, as fewer political figures were strongly anti-clerical. France entered a period of about 15 years during which anti-clericalism diminished. This went in parallel with the *Ralliement* of the French Catholics to the Republic, a move initiated by Pope Leo XIII in order to put a stop to the long conflict opposing the Church and the French Republic. However, between 1901 and 1904 the pace of changes against the Church gradually increased, with a series of measures against religious congregations (dissolution, closure of their schools, confiscation of their possessions), as well as the breakdown of diplomatic relations with the Vatican. 1905 saw the separation of the State and Church[19], which, for free-thinkers, represented "une étape vers la laïcisation intégrale" and "la destruction de la religion". All the French cathedrals became *propriété de l'état* and were allocated a yearly budget. The Church could however use them freely

with the agreement of the state. The Catholic Church was divided between those who wanted to take the law as a new-found freedom and an opportunity to develop, and those who pleaded against a law which organised the apostasy of the nation.[20] A series of popular uprisings followed, at the beginning of the following year, after the *loi des Inventaires* sent inspectors into churches to list the possessions held. Shocked by this lack of respect towards religious objects, many people physically fought the authorities, revealing the tensions still very present in the country. Indeed, we will see later in this chapter that the Catholic painter Edmond Aman-Jean took part in a demonstration against a representative of the civil authorities in 1879. The law on the separation caused not only the financial decline of the Church (there was no more financial support from the state) but also the start of an intellectual detachment on the part of some. Catholic civil servants for instance did not dare go to mass any more, fearing possible problems at work, while ecclesiastical recruitment diminished strongly between 1905 and 1914 in most regions, because the future of young priests was uncertain. Another consequence touched the church buildings themselves. Left to decay for lack of maintenance funds, some threatened to collapse. Maurice Barrès started a campaign in 1910 aimed at their protection, talking about "la grande pitié des églises de France". He finally obtained from the government that the Beaux-Arts would have the duty to protect all the sanctuaries built before 1800. So all the Gothic cathedrals were protected and placed under the control of the state.

Thus between 1870 and 1914, the situation of the French Catholic Church changed enormously, from a rich, powerful organisation working closely with the state through the Ministère des Cultes, to an impoverished, less and less popular one targeted many

times by the republican regime. In such a context, how did the Catholic Church see its monuments, and more precisely, in the framework of this thesis, its cathedrals? The next section provides an insight into the Catholic point of view into the way they considered these monuments. We will then be able to place Catholic paintings of cathedrals within this context.

The French Catholics and their Cathedrals 1870 – 1914

Understanding cathedrals involves understanding their use and the way they were considered by the very people using them. A number of visual documents, as well as guidebooks from the period studied, complemented by historical documents, will help us to place the French cathedrals in their Catholic context between 1870 and 1914.

Religious Festivals in and around Cathedrals

Research has uncovered a number of visual and historical documents showing several French cathedrals in the context of religious festivals. Several of these were represented, particularly on postcards. The festivals taking place at Orléans cathedral were particularly well documented. Outside of regular Catholic festivals, they also celebrated the *fête de Jeanne d'Arc* every 7th and 8th May. On the first day a military parade walked from the barracks to the cathedral and the councillors came out of the city hall to meet the representatives of the clergy on the cathedral's square. The mayor then handed to the bishop Jeanne d'Arc's symbolic standard. The next day, a solemn mass

was said, in the presence of the civil and military authorities, after which a procession left the cathedral to walk the streets of the city[21]. Several photographs show the various steps of the ceremonies: one is a picture of Mgr Touchet, bishop of Orléans, shaking hands with a representative of the civil authorities before entering the cathedral, c.1900 (Fig. 58). Another shows the fire brigade parading in the street facing the cathedral in 1907, and one illustrates the conclusion of the parade on the cathedral's square in 1902 (Figs. 59 and 60). A drawing by M.L. Bombled recalls the 1891 *fête de Jeanne d'Arc*, which took place in the presence of the president of the Republic Sadi Carnot (Fig. 61). The president is represented watching the parade in a street opposite the cathedral, the presence of the building made very important by its position at the centre of the composition and the light coming out of its towers. I also uncovered a short cinematographic document dated 1908 showing the very same *fêtes*, with the military parade opposite the cathedral, the crowds along the streets, the flags adorning the houses and street lamps, and the large religious procession[22].

The city of Reims also organised its own *fête de Jeanne d'Arc* and once again postcards illustrated the events taking place near the cathedral. One such document, dated before 1910, shows a crowd assembled in front of the cathedral for the procession of the relics of saints (Fig. 62). On another, one can see before the background formed by the cathedral, the statue of Jeanne d'Arc covered with flowers (postcard dated 1909, Fig. 63). A third example of this devotion is shown on another 1909 photograph of the inside of the cathedral, where a statue of the saint had been installed (Fig. 64). The text accompanying the picture explains that "à l'occasion de cet événement (...) la cathédrale fut somptueusement décorée"[23].

Even though pilgrimages were mostly organised in places such as Lourdes or La Salette, or other lesser-known, smaller places, some cathedrals also had them in the period we are interested in. Study of an 1881 book on the pilgrimages to the Virgin Mary in France reveals the extent to which cathedrals were used in such a manner. At least eight cathedrals can be identified as places of pilgrimages, amongst which were Soissons, Dijon, Paris or Chartres. The last named was illustrated by Auguste Hoyau in 1895 in a drawing representing the inside of Chartres cathedral during a diocesan pilgrimage (Fig. 65). The nave is shown filled with a large crowd of pilgrims attending mass. The cathedral shown here appears very much alive, and so does the faith of the crowd, standing in the nave, listening attentively to the mass. The eye of the viewer is attracted towards the top of the nave thanks to the vertical lines of the pillars which direct one's gaze to the vaults and to a large banner seemingly representing Christ and the Virgin Mary. However, even though this illustration represents the cathedral as a very popular place of worship, this does not appear to be actually the case, as not many 'outside' pilgrims made the trip to Chartres[24]. The Catholic periodical *La Voix de Notre-Dame*, dated 18 May 1893, states that five organised pilgrimages took place during that particular year. They ranged from the rather small *pèlerinage orléanais*, which is said to have brought 50 young men to Chartres, to the much larger pilgrimage of the parish of Saint-Sulpice in Paris (600 pilgrims), and of course the local diocesan pilgrimage (the periodical states that the cathedral was full for this particular occasion)[25].

It is worth noting that one pilgrimage to Chartres in 1873 took on a political dimension. We will have the opportunity to come back to this connection between the

political and the religious in the last part of this chapter, but Régis Hanrion wrote in 1996 that

> Les 27 et 28 mai 1873, les députés monarchistes, des officiers en uniforme et quarante-mille pèlerins vinrent directement de Versailles par le train. Le motif inavoué de ce pèlerinage était la chute de Thiers. La majorité du clergé était royaliste, et on chantait:
>
> *Protectrice de la France*
> *Vierge de Chartres, au secours, au secours!*
> *Fais éclater ta puissance*
> *Comme dans les anciens jours!*[26]

Several documents also describe the various festivals held in other cathedrals and can give an idea of their popularity. The "procession de l'Ascension" in Angers cathedral is described as the custom of "faire processionnellement (...) le tour de la cathédrale, le jour de l'Ascension"[27]. In Le Mans, the tradition called for a large crucifix to be taken out of the cathedral on Palm Sunday, walked around the town, then brought back to the cathedral for mass[28]. In Amiens cathedral, a procession for Corpus Christi took place inside the cathedral from 1881 onwards, after a by-law forbade religious processions in the streets of the city[29]. This festival was particularly popular in June 1881, when "le pieux cortège ne pouvait qu'à grand peine se frayer un passage à travers les rangs serrés de la foule qui remplissait toute l'étendue de la basilique"[30]. As for Paris, A. Gabourd noted in 1863 that "les jeunes générations se pressent chaque année dans l'enceinte, devenue trop étroite, de la cathédrale de Paris"[31], but in 1874 the Abbé Salmon regretted that many pious people were not aware of the existence of important relics kept in the cathedral and added that "le pèlerinage de Notre-Dame serait assurément plus suivi qu'il ne l'est, si l'on connaissait mieux les trésors sacrés de cet auguste sanctuaire (...)"[32].

This wide range of documents therefore proves that the French cathedrals we are studying were definitely still very much utilized by the faithful on various occasions during the period which interests us. Whether for large festivals, pilgrimages, or more local devotions, the cathedral had remained a focal point for the worship of the locals, and sometimes of pilgrims from further afield. The section below, devoted to Catholic guidebooks on cathedrals, will help us understand even further the Catholic interpretation of cathedrals between 1870 and 1914.

Catholic Guidebooks

A large number of erudite guidebooks were written on or mentioning cathedrals at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, notably those by Baedeker (first published in 1832), Robida's *La Vieille France* series (1890s), John Ruskin's guides to England, France and Italy, or Emile Mâle's studies on French cathedrals, as well as some books which were written by devout Catholics who presented their cathedrals in a different way. Whilst the more 'secular' books tended to focus on the details of architecture and the history behind the building of cathedrals (this would be the case for instance for Ruskin's *La Bible d'Amiens*, 1880, which includes a comprehensive guide to the statues of the portals), the Catholic authors, of whom I give a selection below, emphasised the holiness of these shrines. They gave their Catholic readers a guide to the cathedrals more suited to the way they should be looking at them. These guidebooks are extremely interesting to look at in the context of our study

because they prove, at a time when the State was attempting to overpower the Church, that authors, and indeed their readers, were still very much looking at cathedrals in the traditional way: not so much as architectural wonders, but as the House of God. More to the point, the books I have chosen to explore below will give us an idea as to what to expect a Catholic view of a cathedral to be, and we will see whether these ideas will be found in the Catholic paintings representing cathedrals.

An excellent example of a Catholic guidebook can be found in *Saint-Pierre de Saintes, Cathédrale et insigne basilique, Histoire-Documents-Brefs-Indulgences-Prières*[33] (1871), whose complete title itself gives away the author's beliefs. In this guidebook, the author presents the history and various documents relating to the Saint-Pierre cathedral in a manner which focuses on its Christian connections through the ages. The first chapter for instance opens on a list of saints who have a close link with Saintes (pp. 19 to 43) and gives comprehensive biographical notes on them. When the author comes to explaining the actual construction of the church, he mixes the various episodes of the building with the telling of anecdotes on great Catholics of the area, or on the aggressive attackers who wanted to destroy this symbol of Catholicism ("les démolisseurs de 1793"[34], or "les protestants la [la voûte] renversèrent, ne laissant debout que les chapelles des bas-côtés."[35])

Although rather short, the description of architectural details also includes many references to religious figures, mentioned in a pious manner: "Une calotte de plomb a remplacé la flèche qui devait s'élancer dans les airs. Supposez le clocher ayant encore les 120 pieds du projet primitif, et vous aurez un monument vraiment grandiose, que

devait surmonter la statue du prince des Apôtres."[36] The author also insists on the importance of the cult to the Virgin Mary celebrated in the cathedral, whom he calls "la Reine des anges"[37], and tells of a miracle which happened at one of her altars in the cathedral. The historical chapter ends with the author acknowledging that "il serait trop long de rappeler tout ce qui se rattache de pieux et de saint à ces murs de notre église", and follows his statement by a list of devout kings and aristocrats who prayed in the monument. It is also very important to recognise that the final note of the chapter is given not to the architecture but to the holiness of the place and of its people:

> Ce n'est donc pas seulement par ses proportions grandioses, par sa tour colossale, par les richesses de son architecture, par les magnificences de son portail, ce n'est pas seulement par l'éclat de ses pontifes et des saints du diocèse que brille la cathédrale de Saintes. Ses murs sont saints qui ont vu passer tant de générations de saints; ses voûtes sont saintes qui ont vu prier tant de pieux et illustres personnages; ses chapelles sont saintes, dédiées à la Vierge et aux Apôtres; ses autels sont saints où reposent tant de reliques; son sol est saint où dorment tant de chrétiens fidèles et de pontifes vénérables, où gisent les ossements des martyrs; son pavé est saint, inondé du sang des victimes de l'hérésie. (...)
> Elle [la cathédrale de Saintes] restera pour tous les Saintongeais, pour les habitants de la ville de Saintes en particulier, héritiers de la foi et de la charité antiques, l'église mère de la contrée, le temple qu'ils aiment à voir magnifiquement orné, et peuplé d'un nombreux clergé, le lieu où ont prié et où reposent leurs pères.[38]

One will notice as well the quasi-human quality attributed to the monument in the first paragraph. The cathedral 'sees' and memorises events. This 'humanisation' of the building is characteristic of several texts on cathedrals, in which the monuments take on a great importance and 'act' nearly as humans would[39].

The history of the cathedral is followed by twelve appendices (a total of nearly 80 pages), giving details on various subjects. Afterwards, the author lists a number of 'suppliques' addressed to the Pope, 'brefs' written by Pope Pius IX and various official religious documents related to the cathedral. Useful to the pilgrim visiting the cathedral are also several other sections, for instance a "Méthode pour visiter les sept autels de la

Sainte basilique patriarcale du Vatican (ou de la basilique de Saint-Pierre de Saintes)"[40], or a series of "Prières en l'honneur de Saint Pierre"[41].

Thus this book does not want to be a simple guidebook to the cathedral, but a Catholic, spiritual text aimed at making the reader aware of the holiness of the monument he is visiting. The emphasis is not on architectural prowess (though it is mentioned), but on the Catholics who built the cathedral or had a connection with it. This book wants to present the cathedral as a special place of worship, filled with the spirits of the forefathers, and gives not only a detailed account of their history, but also an actual guide on how to act as a Catholic today. It is essential to keep this idea of such a volume being a moral guide, in order to compare the ideas expressed here with the ones presented in the Catholic paintings of cathedrals.

Notre-Dame de Paris. Guide Complet artistique et religieux, written by the Abbé C. Geispitz in 1878 is also a Catholic guide book to a cathedral, with an added monarchic and patriotic side to its descriptions. Notre-Dame is a sanctuary to the Virgin Mary, "la reine et la protectrice de la France"[42] and "tous nos grands souvenirs nationaux se rattachent par quelque côté à Notre-Dame de Paris"[43]. The main portal of the cathedral is "l'une des plus belles pages de l'art chrétien au treizième siècle". The abbé, lost in front of the building, not knowing how to understand all its details, was fortunate to find a guide for his visit and attributed this to God: "Mais Dieu, dont la paternelle bonté s'étend au plus petit des oiseaux, prit aussi pitié de nous!"[44] he wrote.

There is therefore no doubt as to the Christian manner in which Catholic authors described their cathedrals, giving them their religious qualities and showing the faithful readers the way in which the buildings should be considered. To the French Catholics, cathedrals were between 1870 and 1914 places of regular worship, some were pilgrimage destinations, but all were of course the House of God, beautiful churches where Catholics could worship whilst admiring the beauty of the buildings made by their ancestors. But, as the last guidebook mentioned, cathedrals were also associated with patriotism in a Catholic context. We have already seen in the two previous chapters how the image of cathedrals could be used to inspire patriotic feelings, mostly in a republican way. This chapter will show that these same patriotic feelings can also be associated with the Catholic cathedral. One such example, which I am going to use here as a case study, is that of the stained-glass windows installed in Orléans cathedral in 1897.

Catholic Patriotism and the Cathedral: a Case Study, the Stained-Glass Windows at Orléans

As mentioned, an idea present in Catholic texts about cathedrals is that of patriotism. One particularly good example of this can be found in a speech pronounced by the Bishop of Orléans, Mgr Touchet, in 1897[45] and delivered to celebrate the installation in the cathedral of a series of stained-glass windows representing the life of Jeanne d'Arc, which had been made after Mgr Touchet's predecessor (Mgr Dupanloup) had decided to raise the money for the project. The important element here is the reason why Mgr Dupanloup came to organising such a project. Representing Jeanne d'Arc, the

windows were, according to Mgr Touchet, to be "une réparation" to "l'insulte"[46] Mgr Dupanloup had felt had been done to the peasant girl of Domrémy by Voltaire. The philosopher had written about her in *La Pucelle* and "avait tenté de salir la sainte Libératrice parce qu'elle est la plus haute incarnation du patriotisme religieux."[47] 1878 was the centenary of Voltaire's death, and, while some celebrated the event, Mgr Dupanloup decided to have a series of windows celebrating Jeanne d'Arc. It is important to note that the cathedral managed to raise the money, even though the Orléans area (the Loiret) was not particularly Catholic. It was not one of the départements where religious practice was good around 1877, and did not elect any Legitimist deputy in the 1870s[48]. But even though, the stained glass windows were completed, thus showing a certain involvement and conservative state of mind of at least part of the Catholic population of the area, who were ready to donate money towards an anti-republican cause. In 1897, when the speech was delivered, the windows were finally in place and they presented the opportunity for Mgr Touchet to come back to the patriotism of Jeanne, as opposed to the anti-patriotism of Voltaire, who was called "un très bon Prussien" by the king Friedrich of Prussia, and was, in the words of Mgr Touchet, "l'adulateur éhonté" of this very same king[49], leading of course to the writer's profound dislike for a patriot like Jeanne. Therefore Voltaire was a target for Mgr Dupanloup and for Mgr Touchet because of his anti-clericalism and also his pro-Germanism. In his speech, Mgr Touchet reminded his audience of the sufferings of the Alsace-Lorraine, "qui hurlait de la douleur récente d'avoir été arrachée par le fer au sein de la mère Patrie et jetée non pas dans les bras, mais sous le talon de l'Allemagne!"[50], but insisted on the fact that France will fight until the end. In very strong words, he reminds his audience that their country will not be

taken over: "La France pourra connaître la défaite, elle pourra être poussée jusqu'au bord de l'abîme qui dévore les peuples, elle pourra avoir encore quelque Ramillies[51] ou quelque Waterloo ou quelque Sedan; cependant, à qui prophétiserait la fin de ses destinées, réponds hardiment: La France connut les pires heures, et quand il le fallut, elle fut sauvée par une petite fille. Qu'on n'espère pas voir la France au tombeau: la France est immortelle."[52]

The stained-glass windows themselves, now an intrinsic part of the cathedral, also show the themes evoked by the bishop. The sixth window of the series, for instance, shows Jeanne d'Arc kneeling inside the cathedral to thank God for the success of her mission (Fig. 66). The seventh window also shows the cathedral, and Jeanne attending the coronation of the king, thus making the connection between Church and State, and showing how the two are strongly connected (Fig. 67). An important theme is that of the fight against and the condemnation by, the English. Jeanne fights against them on the fifth window, and on the last one, the tenth window, they are referred to as "l'Anglois perfide", therefore connecting this theme of the invasion by foreigners with the words on Germany pronounced by Mgr Touchet (Figs. 68 and 69).

These ideas of patriotism, pronounced by a bishop during an event celebrating Jeanne d'Arc, are to be kept in mind for the study of Catholic pictures of cathedrals. Can these be linked to patriotism too? In what ways can an image incite one to be proud and defend one's country and to be Catholic at the same time?

Catholic Paintings of Cathedrals

The following paintings all have in common that they carry a Catholic message by placing French cathedrals in a Christian context. The following case studies explore how Catholic associations could be built into images of the cathedral.

Aman-Jean (1860-1936) – Sainte Geneviève devant Paris *(1885)*

A student of Henri Lehmann and Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, Aman-Jean was strongly linked to the literary Symbolists and in particular to Mallarmé, Verlaine, Barbey d'Aurevilly and Villiers de l'Isle Adam. In 1892 and 1893 the painter took part in the exhibition organised by Sar Péladan (the Salons de la Rose+Croix). We need to delve into his biographical details in order to prove that the painting studied here is indeed of Christian inspiration. A biographical notice written by the son of the artist, François Aman-Jean, confirms the strong religious beliefs of the painter. As a boy, his family, described as "bourgeois travailleurs, riches et bien-pensants" would give seven francs to the parish every week to help the poor (this is a substantial amount of money, as a good "charretier de péniche" would earn at the time 5 francs a week)[53]. Aman-Jean lost his parents early and was cared for by an uncle who sent him to a Jesuit boarding school in Paris. His son reports that "il resta marqué toute sa vie par la discipline des bons Pères, leur religiosité sévère, leur culture classique, le regret de la monarchie. C'est d'eux qu'il hérita son amour pour le siècle de Louis XIV, son mépris pour le suffrage universel et la République."[54] Aman-Jean showed his attachment for his Catholic

heritage by demonstrating in the streets when Jules Grévy attacked the wealth of the congregations, and by throwing tomatoes on the representatives of the authorities when, in 1879, "le commissaire du quartier fit ouvrir, au nom de la loi, la grande porte du sombre collège de la rue des Postes [his old school]", whilst singing "Sauvez Rome et la France!"[55]. Moreover, still according to his son, even though Aman-Jean was not particularly keen on following the ritual obligations of the Church, he did go to mass every Sunday[56].

The work with which we are concerned here is purely symbolist: the figure of Sainte Geneviève stands in front of the city of Paris, on the bank of the Seine, in front of the silhouette of Notre-Dame, and holds in her hands a model boat representing Paris, a vessel never submerged (Fig. 70). The timelessness of this piece is essential to the message it conveys. The saint stands in front of a cityscape mostly unchanged over centuries, the sailing boats moored by the side of the river are in no way modern, and the silhouette of Paris cathedral reinforces the idea of continuity. The colour scheme chosen also underlines this: "the palette is light, with brilliant yellows and pale blues in the sky and water" notes Michael Marlais[57], there are no threatening clouds, no blazing sun either. The scene is bathed in the soft light of a setting sun, an occurence which must have repeated itself thousands of times over the centuries. In fact, if one considers this theme of timelessness again, it appears that this work is very much reminiscent of Renaissance pieces representing saints or famous figures. They usually stand in the foreground, while the local landscape is displayed behind them.

The religiosity of this painting emanates of course from the central figure and her halo, and from her connection with the cathedral in the background, even though no

Catholic objects, like possibly a cross or a rosary, are actually used. The saint draws her power from the setting she is placed in, the monument of the background and the fact that she is in the centre of the canvas. The eye is drawn to her immediately, whilst Notre-Dame is the second most important feature, appearing just behind.

So we have a saint in a scene indicating an idea of continuity. Sainte Geneviève is and has been the patron saint of Paris for centuries, but what about Notre-Dame and timelessness? Why is Notre-Dame an important feature here? This picture, and the following one by Jacques Aymer de la Chevalerie, are very particular in the sense that they are part of a relatively small number of identifiably Catholic pictures including cathedrals between 1870 and 1914. So Notre-Dame is a particularly interesting feature here, because it is represented specifically in a Catholic 'environment'. Here the painter does not want to associate the cathedral with the people of Paris, or with a particular political stance, nor does he want to celebrate its architecture. Here the cathedral stands for the purpose for which it was built: religion. The timelessness of this piece seems to indicate that, to the artist, the essence of the cathedral stands very much in its Catholic roots, and nothing can destroy this, not even time. He proves it by showing a scene unchanged by revolutions and political disputes. This reminds us too of the fact, mentioned above, that Aman-Jean was a monarchist and therefore would not have approved of the changes brought by revolutions. Notre-Dame, a proud, elegant silhouette reaching for the sky (it is the highest building in the picture) has withstood wars and the elements and will stand for a long time, even possibly for ever. The contrast between the temporal changes (revolutions, wars) and the non-changing aspect of the cathedral acts as an obvious reminder of the fight between temporal and holy

powers. The first fade away while the latter remain over the centuries, even though they may have to endure difficulties. The sun is setting, there is no trace of modernity, yet Notre-Dame stands as proud as ever. The symbolic meaning of the river could also be explored here: it can be seen as the waterway which carries things away, but also as the river which has always flowed through Paris and by the cathedral, and always will. It may have taken away temporal elements, but remains present by the saint and the cathedral, reminding the viewer of their immortality. Besides, the boats are not moving but anchored by the quay, indicating that the river is not seen here as a carrier, but as an immobile element.

So the Catholic cathedral painted in *Sainte Geneviève* carries a strong message on the continuity of religion through time, discarding revolutions and changes.

Aymer de la Chevalerie **– Sainte Radegonde** ***(1899)***

This picture is composed of three canvases united in the same frame (Fig. 71). The central part of the work represents the figure of the saint, a halo around her head, standing in front of the city of Poitiers, of which she is the protector, and its cathedral. She holds in her hands a model of the Sainte-Croix abbey, which she founded near Poitiers around 552. Above this main painting, in a half-circle, God the Father crowns two figures: sainte Radegonde on the left and a bishop on the right. The bottom painting shows the arrival of the relics of Jesus' cross, which the saint had obtained from the emperor Justinian. The striking feature of this ensemble is the fact that the composition

is very much in a primitive taste. The top picture is composed like a mosaic, while the central part could be, like the Aman-Jean painting, in the style of a Renaissance painting.

Like *Sainte Geneviève*, there is very little doubt here about the profound Catholic message behind this composition. The three scenes represented show religious history scenes, whilst the central character is named on the frame – there is no possible confusion. Furthermore, the painter was probably a strong Catholic himself, being an aristocrat who owned a château in the Poitiers area. The cathedral represented here can be seen as having two roles. The first one is rather mundane. The monument, along with the river, another church and a factory on the left-handside, helps the viewer to identify the city represented in the background of the painting. However, the role of the cathedral can also be that of a reminder of times past, present and future. This is because the cityscape represented in the background does not only focus on timeless buildings, like Aman-Jean's. Here we can clearly see that the Poitiers represented is modern. The obvious presence of the factory and its high chimney on the left-hand side, right next to the figure clad in medieval garments, leaves no doubt as to the period represented. Juxtaposing the old cathedral and the other church with such a modern element allows the painter to make his religious message an up-to-date one: the memory of sainte Radegonde has survived, the cathedral and the church have survived to this day and now live alongside modernism; therefore Catholicism is not old-fashioned but very much anchored in modernity. The role of the cathedral in this painting consists in showing the relevance of Catholicism in a modern world.

Prayers in the Cathedral: Auguste Cabuzel and Louise Saint

The following section is dedicated to two paintings representing people praying in cathedrals, that is to say using them in the way they were intended to be used. What message do these Catholic paintings bring to a late 19th century audience?

Auguste Cabuzel: Une Prière à la Cathédrale *(1889)*

The Cabuzel painting, kept at the Musée de Poitiers, was exhibited at the Salon in 1889 and received two very good reviews (Fig. 72). The first one described it as "d'une tonalité simple et d'une excellente facture" and the other says that "*Une prière à la cathédrale* est traduite dans un sentiment juste. Ces trois paysannes, qui dans la pénombre, se recueillent, donnent parfaitement au spectateur l'impression de leur état d'âme"[58]. The same kind of topic, in surroundings involving a cathedral, has been treated by Alphonse Legros with *Le pèlerinage* (1871, Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery), or by Victor Leydet with *Le Vendredi Saint* (location unknown)[59].

This painting by Cabuzel shows the faith of the people, and does not focus on the cathedral as a monument of architectural importance. What it does, however, is represent the cathedral from the point of view of the congregation. Because the title specifies that the scene takes place in a cathedral, it instantly associates the obvious piety and devotion of the two women with the great building. It emphasises the fact that despite its grandeur, the cathedral is first and foremost the home of the faithful. This idea is shown in the painting by the simplicity of the two women, their black dresses and white

bonnets, the basket and the umbrella left at their feet, opposed to the massive pillar in the background (moreover, the fact that the two figures appear to be peasants probably has its importance; I will develop this idea with the Louise Saint painting below). In spite of the grandeur of the building, the three figures, plunged in a silent prayer, give the cathedral a human face. It reminds the viewer that the cathedrals were built for the very purpose of welcoming the people and permitting them to express their faith. This is the more 'human' face of the cathedral, away from the grandeur of the architecture.

Louise Saint, Intérieur de la Cathédrale de Chartres (c. 1908)

This painting, made by a female artist living in Chartres, was shown at the Salon of 1908 and has belonged to the Musée de Chartres since 1911 (Fig. 73). It represents a small group of peasant women from the Beauce praying opposite the *chapelle du Rosaire* inside Chartres cathedral[60]. The image inspires a deep impression of tranquillity and contemplation. Four women in prayer are visible, three with their heads bowed and the fourth looking reverently at the chapel opposite her. Another figure is kneeling in front of a chapel, on the right-hand side. There is no movement, as all the figures appear to be deeply in prayer, and, one guesses, no sound to be heard either. The tranquillity of the scene is reinforced by the immediately visible image of the sleeping infant in the arms of one of the women in the foreground. Furthermore, an impression of mystery surrounds the figures: whilst the foreground and the middle ground, where they are, is relatively bright; the rest of the picture is darker.

The cathedral here appears again as a place for prayer and meditation. It is undisturbed and away from the modern world. Indeed, the figures present, in peasant clothes, could practically belong to a much earlier medieval period, as no sign of modernity is to be seen, apart perhaps from the black hat of one of the women in the middle ground. The immobility of the whole scene reinforces this timelessness.

Several remarks may be made as to the messages carried by this kind of cathedral picture. First, one may comment on the fact that Catholicism is represented as still being alive, but also as being the religion of the poorer elements of the population. The women represented here appear to be from the country surrounding Chartres, the Beauce, and not town dwellers (apart possibly from the older woman wearing a black hat). The importance of faith in the French countryside may be summarised in a sentence written by Justin Bessou, a priest who published *Du berceau à la tombe* in 1893 and who said that "foi, patois et paysan sont trois qui ne font qu'un"[61]. However, in this particular region of the Beauce, it appears that religious practice was very low. Gérard Cholvy notes in *Christianisme et société en France au XIXe siècle* that as early as 1850, in the Beauce, "rares sont les familles où se dit la prière du soir". So the women presented in the painting would be the exception rather than the norm, they would only represent a very small percentage of the local population. In this light, the fact that they appear huddled in a corner of the cathedral takes on a different meaning: these women may now be considered as the *résistants* who still practise the Catholic religion. The empty chair near the middle of the composition may signify the empty place of the ones who do not come to church any longer. The infant, asleep, can be seen as the new generations who

will take no interest in the religion of their ancestors. However, the very fact that this child is present may on the contrary suggest that there is hope for the future of the Church.

Second, one may comment on the fact that all the characters present in the picture are female, which may indicate the importance religion has for women compared to men. Indeed, Cholvy notes the importance women started to take in the Catholic Church at the end of the 19th century. The secularisation of primary schooling in 1882 "a (...) relancé très fortement l'appel à la collaboration des femmes"[62] within the Church in order to teach children catechism, a task that school teachers were not allowed to do any longer. It is unlikely that the peasant women represented in the picture would have been Sunday school teachers for lack of education, but they would certainly have had a role within their own family, giving the good example to their children by going to church and praying. This idea is present in this painting with the woman in the foreground taking her baby with her inside the cathedral.

Third, one may comment too on the main figure of this scene: the woman with her sleeping infant in her arms. In Christian imagery, she could be a representation of the Virgin Mary with the infant Jesus. Her prominent place in the composition, as well as her pose, eyes closed in deep meditation, and her simple peasant clothes (the Virgin Mary was also from the country), make her a figure easily linked to the Virgin Mary. The meaning of this association may be the following: in an almost empty cathedral possibly representing the decline of Catholicism, there is still hope as the Virgin Mary is still there, as she has been for centuries (and we find again the idea of timelessness). Also, perhaps, she could be praying for the lost ewes to come back to the Church.

So this powerful image of Chartres cathedral, used as a place of worship, carries many symbols and many possible meanings in such a picture. It is difficult to tell the exact significance of this painting, but the interpretations I give above certainly do not exclude one another. The true significance is therefore in the eyes of the viewer, as a believer will interpret the picture differently from a non-believer. The latter will see in it either the slow death of the religion, or, and even possibly with, the deep faith still alive of certain people.

The two pictures by Cabuzel and Saint studied in this section dealt with a Catholic subject in an obvious manner. The next section will analyze two other representations of cathedrals which may not be as obviously Catholic. I believe however that they deal with cathedrals on a spiritual level which certainly says something about Catholicism.

Spirituality and the Cathedral: Alexandre Ségé et Paul-César Helleu

The two following pictures by Ségé and Helleu use cathedrals in a manner which could be described as spiritual, as the messages conveyed relate to religion on a spiritual level rather than to Catholicism specifically. They are however very contrasting pictures: Ségé's is a horizontal landscape showing the countryside near Chartres, whilst Helleu's paintings are vertical images representing the interior of Reims and Paris cathedrals

Ségé: En pays chartrain *(c.1884)*

Ségé (1818-1885) is known for his "grands paysages" with their "horizons dégagés, (...) immenses panoramas aux plans nettement différenciés"[63]. The canvas entitled *En pays chartrain*, presented at the 1884 Salon, certainly matches this definition (Fig. 74). It represents Chartres cathedral seen from the nearby open plain of the Beauce. The foreground is occupied by a flock of sheep, the middle ground by a village and the background by the silhouette of the cathedral, under a vast sky (representing about two thirds of the canvas). A large light grey cloud covers the central part of the sky and covers up the sun.

This rural view could be seen as just this, but I believe a more spiritual message may be read in this carefully composed painting. The central position of the cathedral, first of all, makes it one of the three prominent elements of the composition with the flock of sheep situated directly underneath it, and the cloud directly above. I believe the three elements may be read as connected, and give an important message about the contemporary and future situation of the Catholic Church in France. The grey cloud above the cathedral may be seen, as Richard Thomson puts it, "as if in benediction of this peaceful scene"[64], but its very shape, invading the sky in a rather menacing manner, as well as the fact that it is hiding the sun, may altogether bring a more negative meaning to the whole painting. At the end of the 19th century "the diocese of Chartres was one of the least observant in France" noted John House in *Landscapes of France*[65], so the cathedral obscured by the large cloud may well represent the situation of a Church in decline, threatened by outside forces attempting to overcome it. John House added

that in the context of anti-clericalism that we know, "the combat between sun and cloud over the cathedral could be seen as a re-enactment of the struggle" between Church and State. The sunrays at the top of the canvas may presuppose an eventual victory of religion, but nothing is certain, as the cathedral and the sheep are left in the shade. The flock and their shepherd are an evident Gospel image, but even though most of the sheep are following their shepherd, several appear as if they may be left behind by themselves, representing possibly the lost souls who have given up their religion.

So I believe this is an altogether rather negative vision of the future of the Catholic Church in France given here by Ségé. The cathedral, presented in such a composition, incites the viewer to reflect upon the situation of the Church in a spiritual manner, thanks to the Biblical elements given in the painting.

Helleu: the Empty Grandeur of Cathedrals. La Cathédrale de Reims *(1892) and* Intérieur de Notre-Dame de Paris *(1893)*

Helleu (1859-1927) was 15 years old when he discovered the Impressionists, from whom he was going to draw his ideas about the representation of light. He was a friend of Monet's from the 1880s (the latter chose him as a witness for his second wedding in 1892), and Monet's letters, published in Daniel Wildenstein's *Monet - Vie et Oeuvre*, show that the two artists corresponded and that Monet let Helleu know he was working on Rouen cathedral. On 12 March 1892 Monet wrote to Helleu that he is "en plein travail à Rouen, car je peins la cathédrale"[66], and on 23 February 1893 he said he was "en plein travail aux prises avec la cathédrale"[67]. Whether Helleu was inspired by

Monet's work remains uncertain, but as he knew of Monet's series he may well have been inspired by it.

Helleu's cathedral paintings, large vertical canvases showing the interior of Reims and Notre-Dame, infuse into the viewer a remarkable sense of calm and greatness (Figs. 75 and 76). *La Cathédrale de Reims* (1892)[68], found in the reserves of the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen, is a view from the choir of the cathedral towards the central portal and the rose above. The scene is mostly plunged into darkness, although the very soft light emanating from the stained-glass roses above the door enlightens part of the interior. Pillars can be seen on the left-hand side, and to the right one can distinguish the outline of a few figures (possibly four). The foreground is occupied in the left-hand corner by part of the altar. The interest of this interior resides in the fact that Helleu managed to capture the atmosphere of mystery, grandeur and meditation of the cathedral in a most admirable way. Octave Mirbeau was one of the first admirers of the painter and noted the following on this very painting:

"La Cathédrale de Reims, sereine, pacifique; les piliers montent comme des prières; les architraves dessinent des courbes, des arcs solennels; un grand silence religieux emplit la baie déserte, et la rosace, au fond du choeur, s'épanouit doucement, en lueurs tranquilles. L'effet est grandiose; le recueillement de la pierre impressionne."[69] This idea that the stones seem to be praying is produced thanks to several elements, which give the viewer an impression of silence and calm, almost as if this interior was cut off from the rest of the world. The imposing calm is underlined by the geometry of the forms represented: the roses, the pillars, the round form of the steps going up to the altar, the tall candles placed on it. These are very regular forms, which nothing comes to break up,

resulting in an overall tranquillity. Calm is also reinforced by the softness of the light, coming from the rose above the door (yellow/purple/red), and falling both on the pillars and on the floor in the foreground, where it is a light pink/yellow. The idea of tranquillity is finally also conveyed by the fact that there are no harsh lines to delimit the forms, they have very soft contours.

Another idea emerges from this painting, that of grandeur and mystery. Although the canvas is very large, it lets the viewer see only part of the interior, hinting at how much larger it must be. The darkness of most of the scene contributes to the impression of mystery; it also emphasises the size of the building by making it impossible for the viewer to see where it starts or finishes. Finally, the grandeur of this interior is also underlined by a number of vertical features, such as the pillars, the door, the side of the altar and the tall candles standing on it, leaving the viewer with the near impression of infinity.

This painting is particularly relevant in our study because it shows that representing the interior of a cathedral rather than its exterior permits to convey an entirely different atmosphere. Here nothing comes to distract from the main subject matter. One is not distracted by the landscape, or the presence of figures, or possibly the activity of a city. The focus is on the spiritual atmosphere generated by the cathedral, rendered powerfully thanks to particular, well-chosen elements. The painter represented the cathedral in its bare state, as it was intended to be seen and make people feel.

The very same ideas may be found in another of Helleu's cathedrals paintings, namely *Intérieur de Notre-Dame de Paris*, which he exhibited at the 1893 Salon. The critic Gustave Geffroy admired the impressionist effects of the painting in the following

words: "Il est facile de reconnaître une grâce native, une adresse jolie à exprimer les sensations reçues dans ces effets de vitraux. Le kaléidoscope inattendu, l'éblouissement de vert et de violet, de bleu et de rose, a évidemment ébloui et enchanté l'artiste et il a manifesté pour nous son ravissement."[70] Like the Reims painting, this canvas is full of the atmosphere of the great cathedral, of its tranquillity and spirituality. The geometric lines (the shape of the rose, as well as the verticality of the pillars) make it a well balanced composition in which there is no space for any disturbance. Everything looks set in its place, bathed in a soft light and in what we imagine must be silence, as no human presence may be seen.

It is difficult to say whether Helleu's cathedrals carry a specifically Catholic message, as very little is known about his private beliefs. He did marry in church in 1886, so we certainly assume that he was not against it. I do believe however that these two representations of Reims cathedral and Notre-Dame certainly have a spiritual message, if not an overtly Catholic one. Christian signs are represented (the altar and candles on the Reims painting and a couple of stone crosses on the Notre-Dame canvas), but I believe it is the overall impression given by both paintings which matters. The viewer cannot but be impressed by these large canvases which make him feel as if he was actually inside the cathedral and enveloped by its atmosphere. The painter creates a strong impression of grandeur and tranquillity which may in turn induce a state of reflection for the viewer. The spirituality present in the atmosphere created by the painting may therefore inspire the viewer and lead him towards higher thoughts.

The Catholic cathedral paintings studied in this section therefore carry different meanings about the Catholic Church and Catholicism. They can underline the faith of the people or point out the difficulties the Church faces at the turn of the century. But these cathedrals do not appear to be used in a nationalistic way, as writings on cathedrals or the stained-glass windows at Orléans may have suggested. In the following section, I want to explore a particular aspect of Catholic ceremonies in cathedrals: their use within the context of state funerals. This will be a useful analysis as a republican ceremony being held in a Catholic building appears at first to be very paradoxical, to say the least.

The Use of Cathedrals within a Civil Context: the Case of National Funerals

In spite of the anti-clericalism of the Third Republic, described above, it appears that the French State did use cathedrals for ceremonies honouring its great men. This is the case of national funerals, which mix Catholic ceremonies with republican symbols and honour men who may even have been anti-clerical themselves. In order to analyse the use of cathedrals in such a republican context, I have chosen three illustrated cases: the funerals of presidents Félix Faure and Sadi Carnot, and that of the scientist Louis Pasteur, which all occurred in the 1890s.

Frédéric Houbron's Les Funérailles du président Félix Faure à Notre-Dame, le 23 février 1899

Frédéric Houbron's *Les Funérailles du président Félix Faure à Notre-Dame, le 23 février 1899*, shows a cathedral interior in a completely different manner from what we have seen so far (Fig. 77). Here the emphasis is not any more on the meditative and tranquil aspect of an empty cathedral, but rather on the atmosphere created by a state occasion. This painting, representing the Catholic funeral of a president, is interesting for its paradoxical aspect: it shows a republican man being prayed for in a Christian building. But in 1899, the notions of Republicanism and Catholicism are usually seen as radically opposed. Here, in a painting, they are however put together.

In order to better understand the contrast this painting makes, a few details about Faure's political ideas are necessary. He was elected and re-elected a moderate Republican *député* in Le Havre in 1881, 1885, 1889 and 1893. He became a *sous-secrétaire d'état* (1881-82) under Gambetta's government (Gambetta had been notorious for his ideas on the separation of the Church and the state[71]), then again in 1883-85 under Ferry's government (the minister who imposed secularity in schools), and under Tirard's government (1888), before becoming *ministre de la Marine* in 1894-95 under Dupuy's government . In January 1895, following the demission of Jean Casimir-Perier, he was elected president. It therefore seems that Faure was anything but an ardent Catholic supporter. His funeral at Notre-Dame was mostly because his wife wanted a religious ceremony. However, he was not the first president to receive a funeral ceremony in Notre-Dame: Sadi Carnot, who was assassinated in 1894, was given a

national funeral in the cathedral before being buried in the Panthéon. We will come back to his funeral below.

The painting representing the funeral of Félix Faure is interesting because it is a mixture of religiosity and patriotism, at a time when Christianity and Republicanism were on antagonistic terms, even though the *Ralliement* meant that the two powers were not as strongly opposed as they could have been. A proof of this antagonism can be seen in the fact that the funeral at Notre-Dame was not particularly well reported in the papers of the time. *L'Illustration* for instance, the popular illustrated magazine, even though covering rather significantly the death and funeral of Faure, does not mention the Notre-Dame ceremony at all. Instead, the magazine focuses on the republican and patriotic aspects of the events. A large picture on the front cover of the issue of 25 February 1899 shows a soldier tying a black ribbon on a tricolour flag bearing the words *Honneur et Patrie*. Inside the issue, the readers could find a biographical article on Faure, as well as a double page of illustrations showing *Les derniers moments du président Faure*(in a bed, surrounded by his family and his doctors, whilst in reality he died whilst with his mistress!), the *Notification de l'élection présidentielle*, *M. Loubet* [the new president] *et le ministère après la transmission des pouvoirs* and the *Congrès de Versailles – Aspect de la salle des bulletins de vote*. Even more significantly, the magazine devotes a double page to a very large drawing entitled *Funérailles de M. Félix Faure – Le cortège défilant sur la Place de la République*. Shown on this picture is the richly decorated hearse, drawn by four horses and followed by a procession of civil and military officials. The large monument to the Republic occupies a large space on the right hand-side, emphasising the importance of this symbol when attached to the late president. This is

very much presented as a civil, republican state funeral, not as a religious one. This idea is further emphasised by the comments written describing *Les derniers moments de M. Félix Faure*[72]: "M. Félix Faure avait été transporté sur un simple matelas disposé à la hâte tout près du buste de la République." It does mention however the presence of a priest by the side of the dying man ("requis pour apporter au mourant les secours de la religion"), but insists on the power of science "bien qu'ayant reconnu l'impossibilité de sauver le président, les médecins qui l'entouraient n'en recoururent pas moins jusqu'au bout aux suprêmes resources de la science (...)". Finally, the magazine also shows a picture of the tomb of the president, surmonted by a cross, but even though this Christian sign makes the place a Christian burial, *L'Illustration* does not make any comment about it and only describes the tomb in a very factual manner. The next issue of the magazine, dated 4 March 1899, carries on with the topic of the funeral, and shows another large picture of it[73], this time focusing on yet another civil aspect of it: the speeches in front of the main entrance to the Père Lachaise cemetery. The picture is accompanied by an article[74] describing the event and the personalities attending it. Extracts from the speeches delivered are also quoted, among which this sentence by the vice-president of the Sénat, M. Franck-Chauveau: "le président Faure a véritablement incarné l'âme de la patrie"; while Charles Dupuy, president of the Conseil, adds: "La France gardera fidèlement la mémoire de son président. Elle aimait en lui l'enfant du peuple, élevé par son travail et ses mérites jusqu'à la magistrature suprême de la République."

In such a context, the religious funeral of a man who was so obviously attached to Republican ideals carries many questions. How can a Republican be offered a religious ceremony? How can a religious ceremony be associated with Republican ideas? These

questions may be answered by the painting of the Notre-Dame ceremony made by Houbron.

It is a vertical image, emphasising the great size of the building, taken from the gallery, probably above the portals, looking in the direction of the altar. The indistinct crowd attending the event is represented by numerous dots of colour (mostly black however). Dark colours dominate the whole scene: the stones are brown, the canopy installed above the coffin is black, black flags ornate the sides, above the level of the gallery. Blue/violet rays of light come from the stained-glass windows. Aside these dark tones, tricolour flags are also placed on the sides, and a dozen chandeliers (yellow and orange) light up the interior.

The mixed message given by the painting, and, as it represents a real event, by this event itself, is that the Republic and religiosity can actually go together. In a dark cathedral, whose architectural elements and specially installed decorations seem to be in mourning for the president, the tricolour flags remind the viewer that we are attending a state event as well as a religious one. This is particularly significant, especially if we consider the year of this funeral. In 1899 the *Ralliement* was an important matter for French Catholics. Pope Leo XIII wrote in 1885 two encyclicals developing the bases of a political philosophy of the *Ralliement* (*Immortale Dei* and *Libertas proestantissimum*). In 1891, he sent a new nuncio to Paris, Monsignor Ferrata, a man completely in favour of his politics. The following year the Pope published an encyclical in French, *Au milieu des sollicitudes*, in which he invited all French to accept the Republic and distinguished the authorities from anti-clerical hostility. Even though a number of French Catholics and clerics did not accept the idea of a *Ralliement* at first (it is the case of monarchists in

particular), a compromise appeared over time. Catholic papers such as *La Justice Sociale* or *Le Sillon*, as well as personalities such as de Mun contributed to its acceptance. The funeral of Félix Faure can therefore be read as an act consistent with the climate of the *Ralliement*: as a gesture by which the Republic meets Catholicism for a national occasion. Both powers are present in the cathedral, but neither seems to take over the other in this instance. Houbron's painting shows the *Ralliement* in action, the presence of the Catholic ceremony within the Catholic cathedral for a Republican event.

The Funerals of Sadi Carnot and Louis Pasteur

If Faure's funeral is a particularly interesting example showing a state event in the religious context of a cathedral, involving a strong republican figure, it is by no means the only one with such a paradox attached to it. Sadi Carnot (born in 1837) was given a national funeral at Notre-Dame after he was assassinated by an anarchist on 24 June 1894. Carnot is described by P. Harismendy, his biographer, as a man whose religious convictions "n'étaient guère profondes", unlike his wife's, but who had however given his children a religious education[75]. He asked for Mgr Coullié, archbishop of Lyon, to give him the last rites. This was a complex action, but Carnot's presidency "avait connu l'apaisement religieux" and, as mentioned above, the *Ralliement* of the Church to the institutions of the Republic. So, through his decision to ask for the last rites, Carnot was showing that religion was a private matter and that secularism did not mean anti-clericalism[76]. This idea of an association between Church and state within the

framework of the *Ralliement* may be seen in the illustrations representing the funeral of the president at Notre-Dame.

Contemporary illustrated newspapers reported the ceremony and illustrations allow us to see the interior and exterior of Notre-Dame de Paris during the funeral. *Le Monde illustré* dated 30 June 1894 gives a full account of the president's last moments and presents an illustration with a religious character: that of the bedroom where the late President lay, where a crucifix is clearly visible next to the bed and *prie-dieus* have been installed (Fig. 78). The next issue of the magazine, published on 7 July 1894, presents three illustrations showing Notre-Dame: that of the façade of the cathedral, with the three portals draped in black fabric (Fig. 79), the new president Casimir-Perier standing in the church, and an entire page representing the interior of the cathedral during the funeral service. Many candles burn and black fabric decorates the walls, whilst French flags are also visible. *L'Illustration* shows exactly the same scene on a double page, albeit from a different angle, in its 7 July 1894 edition (Fig. 80). On this drawing the association of the secular and the sacred is even more obvious, as the letters RF for *République Française* form an evident part of the decoration. The candelabras, the candles, the vaults of Notre-Dame, the stained-glass windows and the French symbols form a seemingly paradoxical ensemble. The same paper also publishes a very large illustration on a double page showing the exterior of the cathedral as the funeral procession is leaving the church. Here again the Christian symbols mix with the republican ones: the hearse decorated with French flags is represented in front of the façade of the cathedral, and on the right-hand side of the drawing the statue of Charlemagne (1882) seems to insist on the Catholic, monarchic and powerful aspects of

France. The king is shown with his crown surmounted by a cross, and holds his sceptre high into the Parisian sky.

So the funeral of Sadi Carnot appears to be a symbol of unification rather than a paradox between the Church and the State. Because of his personality, of his own decision to have the last rites administered, the mix of religious and republican elements in the funeral at Notre-Dame does not appear as incongruous as it does for Faure.

The following year saw the state funeral of Louis Pasteur, honoured for the services he rendered to science. In private, Pasteur was most certainly a religious man, as he died holding a crucifix[77] and the inscription on his tomb at the Institut Pasteur refers to the virtues of the Gospel[78]. His funeral in a Catholic church has therefore nothing surprising, but because it was a state funeral, we find here once again the association of the Church and the State within the context of a cathedral. Pierre Darmon gives in his biography of Pasteur an idea of this blend of religion and secularity: "Après le service religieux, qui fut célébré à Notre-Dame, Poincaré prononça un discours près du catafalque dressé sur le parvis."[79] *Le Monde illustré* shows the funeral procession in front of Notre-Dame on a large illustration covering its front page on 12 October 1895. French flags and RF symbols decorate the portals of the cathedral, which becomes once again the theatre of a national drama orchestrated by the state.

In a context of republicanism and more or less strong anti-clericalism, Notre-Dame de Paris, through state funerals, succeeded in finding a place which made it part of both the secular and the religious worlds. The cathedral therefore continued its tradition of

being the seat of events of a national importance. It is indeed still the case today, as the Te Deum celebrated for the Liberation of Paris in 1944 or the service held for the late president Mitterrand in 1996 prove. So the association of the cathedral with the secular, even if it appears paradoxical at first, certainly carries a message in itself. A message of personal choice, religion being a private matter (as was the case for Carnot and Pasteur), and certainly also a message of possible understanding between the two powers. The cathedral, with the candles and the flags all in one place, may then represent the possible union of the French, whether religious or not, within a symbol of their common past.

The religious cathedral therefore carries many aspects, as the study of the wide range of materials provided in this chapter suggests. It is the cathedral used for Catholic ceremonies, and for patriotic ones like the *fêtes de Jeanne d'Arc.* It is the cathedral where simple, faithful people pray. It is the cathedral which may not see many faithful coming to it any longer as Catholicism is fading. It is also the cathedral used by the Republic to celebrate its great men; it can even be seen as a symbol of the *Ralliement.* Even though paradoxical to a certain extent, all these approaches show nevertheless the importance the cathedral kept during the Third Republic as a religious building. Catholicism may have been declining, but the image of the cathedral as a religious building remained, even for those who may not have agreed with religion. The strong presence of the cathedral, its imprint on the French dating back centuries may in no case be underestimated. The cathedral remained a Catholic building between 1870 and 1914, and was represented as such by artists who could load it with a religious message for

their time, whether positive or more pessimistic. Far from being forgotten as a religious building, far from being used only in nationalistic or patriotic manners, the cathedral was indeed a messenger for Catholicism, even during the Third Republic.

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[1] Examples from LATREILLE, A., PALANQUE, J.-R., DELARUELLE, E. & RÉMOND, R., 1962, pp. 402-3.
[2] The churches became possession of the Commune, and were either closed or turned into clubs, shops or prisons. Some were planned to be demolished, but only one actually was (Notre-Dame de Bercy). The text ordering this started in this way: "Attendu que les prêtres sont des bandits et que les repaires où ils ont assassiné moralement les masses en courbant la France sous les griffes des infâmes Bonaparte, Favre et trochu, sont les églises (...)", these were closed. (Quote from LATREILLE, A., PALANQUE, J.-R., DELARUELLE, E. & RÉMOND, R., 1962, p.403).
[3] MCMANNERS, J., 1972, p. 22.
[4] LATREILLE, A., PALANQUE, J.-R., DELARUELLE, E. & RÉMOND, R., 1962, p.406.
[5] MATHEVON, G. (Abbé), 1873, p. 5.
[6] Ibid., p. 46.
[7] LATREILLE, A., PALANQUE, J.-R., DELARUELLE, E. & RÉMOND, R., 1962, p. 425.
[8] MCMANNERS, J., 1972, p. 21.
[9] LATREILLE, A., PALANQUE, J.-R., DELARUELLE, E. & RÉMOND, R., 1962, p. 430.
[10] Ibid., p. 434.
[11] Ibid., p. 434.
[12] Ibid., p. 435.
[13] Ibid., p. 436.
[14] CHOLVY, G. and HILAIRE, Y.-M., 1986, pp. 67-71.
[15] SORLIN, P., 1969, p. 162.
[16] Other elements of the virulent anticlericalism of the time included for instance a story entitled *Les amours secrètes de Pie IX*, serialised in 1881 in *Le Midi Républicain*. Its author, Léo Taxil, also composed a *Marseillaise anticléricale*, while Montéhus wrote *La Marche Anticléricale* and a *Carmagnole anarchiste* included an anticlerical verse. ("Que désire un républicain (bis) / Vivre et mourir sans calotin (bis) / La Vierge à l'écurie / Le Christ à la voirie / et le Saint Père au diable") From CHOLVY, G., and HILAIRE, Y.-M., 1986, pp. 26-27.
[17] MCMANNERS, J., 1972, p. 5.
[18] Ibid., p. 62.
[19] Here are extracts from the first two articles of the 9 December 1905 law:
Article 1er: *«La République assure la liberté de conscience. Elle garantit le libre exercice des cultes...».*
Article 2: *«La République ne reconnaît, ne salarie ni ne subventionne aucun culte...»*
[20] CHOLVY, G., and HILAIRE, Y.-M., Toulouse, 1986, p. 110.
[21] DEBAL, J., 1998, pp. 122-124.
[22] *Fête de Jeanne d'Arc à Orléans (en 1908)*, Images animées, 2 min, Tournage cinéma, Gaumont.
[23] PROCUREUR, J. P., 1973, p. 129.
[24] JOLY, R.,1993, p. 80.
[25] "Pèlerinages chartrains de l'année 1893", in *La Voix de Notre-Dame*, 18 mai 1893.
[26] HANRION, R., 1996, p. 109.
[27] BARBIER DE MONTAULT, X., "La procession de l'Ascension à la cathédrale d'Angers", in *La Revue d'Angers*, undated, p. 1.
[28] TRIGER, R., 1926, p. 138-139.
[29] SOYEZ, E., 1896, pp. 60-61.
[30] Ibid., p. 61.
[31] GABOURD, A., 1863, p. 11.

[32] SALMON, F.R. (Abbé), 1874, pp. 175-176.
[33] AUDIAT, L., 1871.
[34] Ibid., p. 54
[35] Ibid., p. 56
[36] Ibid., pp. 54-55
[37] Ibid., p. 71
[38] Ibid., pp. 78-80
[39] I will quote for instance Emile Zola in *Le Rêve*. Even though the novelist was not religious, he wrote an entire novel revolving around a cathedral, in which it becomes the ally, the friend of a young girl. *Angélique, le matin et le soir, restait longuement accoudée au balcon, côte à côte avec sa grande amie la cathédrale. (...) Elle la sentait éveillée sous les ténèbres, pleine d'une songerie de sept siècles, grande des foules qui avaient espéré et désespéré devant ses autels. C'etait une veille continue, venant de l'infini du passé, allant à l'éternité de l'avenir, la veille mystérieuse et terrifiante d'une maison où Dieu ne pouvait dormir.* (Fasquelle edition, copyright 1911, p.73)
[40] AUDIAT, L., 1871, pp. 204-210.
[41] Ibid., pp. 221-240.
[42] GEISPITZ, C. (Abbé), 1878, p. 9.
[43] Ibid., p. 10.
[44] Ibid., p. 11.
[45]TOUCHET (Mgr), 1899.
[46] Ibid., p. 7
[47] Ibid., p. 5
[48] These two facts from TOMBS, R., 1996, pp. 260-261.
[49] TOUCHET (Mgr), 1899, p. 5
[50] Ibid., p. 6
[51] Major battle in the War of Spanish Succession, 23 May 1706. The Duke of Marlborough, leading English, Dutch, and German troops, decisively defeated a French army led by the Duke of Villeroi at Ramillies-Orfus, near Mons, on the bank of the river Mehaigne in Brabant. This victory cleared the French from the Spanish Netherlands.
[52] TOUCHET (Mgr), 1899, p. 14
[53] *Souvenir d'Aman-Jean 1859-1936*, 1970, p. 11.
[54] Ibid., p. 13.
[55] Ibid., p. 13.
[56] Ibid., p. 41.
[57] MARLAIS, M., 'Seurat et ses amis de l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, octobre 1989, p. 155.
[58] CABUZEL, M.,1939.
[59] Represents the cathedral of La Rochelle.
[60] JOLY, R., 1993, p 62.
[61] Quoted in CHOLVY, G., 2001, p. 87.
[62] CHOLVY, G., 2001, p. 47.
[63] *Paysages de la région centre (1800-1914) dans les collections publiques régionales*, Exposition circulante, 1985-1988, p. 102.
[64] THOMSON, R., 1994, p. 123.
[65] HOUSE, J., 1995, p. 156.
[66] Letter dated 12 March 1892, in Wildenstein, D., 1979, p. 265.
[67] Letter dated 23 February 1893, in Wildenstein, D., 1979, p. 270.
[68] In the same year he also painted the interior of Chartres cathedral and the interior of the Saint-Denis basilica.
[69] Cited in MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC, R. de, 1913, pp. 44-45.
[70] Quoted by LAPEYRE, J. in *Paul Helleu – Musée de Dieppe 7 juin – 17 septembre 1962*, 1962, p. X.

[71] Gambetta said for instance: "When you need to appeal to the energy of men educated by [religious] teachers ... when you speak to them of their civic duties ... of devotion to the Fatherland, you encounter a softened, debilitated human type, resigned to every misfortune as if to decrees of Providence." Gambetta, 1871, cited in TOMBS, R., 1996, p. 138.
[72] *L'Illustration*, 25 février 1899, p.132
[73] *L'Illustration*, 4 mars 1899, pp. 140-1
[74] *L'Illustration*, 4 mars 1899, p. 139
[75] HARISMENDY, P., 1995, p. 13.
[76] Ibid., pp. 13-14.
[77] DROUIN, H., 1928, p. 242.
[78] CONCASTY, M.-L., 1964, p.50.
[79] DARMON, P., 1995, p. 394.

Chapter Four
Monet and the Rouen painters

Quelle difficulté [...] Je suis rompu, je n'en peux plus [...] j'ai eu une nuit remplie de cauchemars: la cathédrale me tombait dessus, elle semblait ou bleue ou rose ou jaune...
Monet, letter to Alice Hoschedé
Rouen, 3 April 1892[1]

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the various manners in which one particular cathedral may be seen by several artists. I have chosen to concentrate on Rouen cathedral, for it was chosen by Claude Monet for his famous series painted in 1892 and 1893 and also by many other artists. This chapter will therefore present this series, its immediate reception and later critical interpretations, before assessing other representations of Rouen cathedral by local *normand* painters. The chapter acts as an example of how complex the representation and interpretation of a single cathedral might be.

Various problems may be raised, to which study of the painters and their works will give answers. First is the aim of the artist. Why did they choose Rouen cathedral as a motif? Second is how each painting, or image, might be represented, and how the associations it might carry could be interpreted. What does Rouen cathedral represent in these different paintings? Linked to this is of course the means used by the artist to convey his particular message. How is the cathedral depicted; how are the paintings composed, how can colours be used in order to convey particular ideas? One also need to raise the questions of the painters's origins, in order to see whether their being *normand* may have had an influence on their representations of the cathedral. The idea of regional pride comes here into play, for the Third Republic

was trying to unify France through the educational system for instance at the time. The local artists, proud of their provincial capital, may have wanted to present its cathedral in a particular way.

However, before delving into the paintings themselves, and in order to gain a better idea of the importance of Rouen cathedral at the time, I want to first present the monument as seen by contemporary writers. This will allow us to understand the value and the significance of this cathedral at the end of the 19th century.

Rouen cathedral in the eyes of writers

Guidebooks

These give an invaluable insight into the way Rouen cathedral was considered both by the Church and by secular writers, and show the importance the monument was given around the time Monet and the Rouen painters represented their cathedral. The visitor coming to Rouen at the end of the 19th century would have had a number of guidebooks to choose from, and from which he would have obtained differing viewpoints on the cathedral. These books pitch themselves in different ways, which is an interesting introduction to Rouen cathedral, as the painters studied afterwards present their cathedral in different manners too.

The *Guide de France-Rouen, Elbeuf et les environs* (1887-88) presents the cathedral like a curiosity rather than a religious monument, insisting on the oddity of some of its features: "Le double portail latéral gauche (…), est remarquable par ses nombreuses sculptures grotesques et symboliques. –Le portail latéral droit, dit Portail

de la Calende, n'est pas moins curieux à visiter."[2] Moreover, this book never calls the monument 'Notre-Dame' but 'la cathédrale'. We therefore have here a guidebook for the curious, lay traveller rather than the Christian, which focuses on the cathedral as a curiosity from the past.

The *Guide Joanne* on Rouen (1887) is a pocket-sized guidebook which wants first and foremost to be a practical help to the visitors to the city by offering a map and a list of hotels and restaurants. It describes the town, its history and main points of interest, and also gives a rather factual account of a visit to the cathedral, even though the author does give his opinion several times. "La façade proprement dite, composée de pinacles, d'arcatures à jour, de balustrades, de niches, vides pour la plupart, de trois portes et d'une grande rose, le tout fort mutilé et en partie renouvelé par une restauration qu'on ne s'est même pas donné la peine de poursuivre, laissant à faire les ravalements."[3]

But even though this is again a guidebook very much devoted to the cathedral's features, the beauty of the monument did not escape the writer, who starts his commentary on the cathedral with these words: "Notre-Dame, une des plus belles cathédrales gothiques"[4] and acknowledges the talent of the builders: "le génie normand se fait déjà sentir"[5]. We therefore have here again a guidebook focusing on facts, which presents the cathedral as a beautiful and interesting work of art.

In Christian guidebooks, the viewpoint is different, as the authors focus on the religiosity of the building, hence giving the monument an aura absent from the factual accounts. *La Cathédrale de Rouen*, written by the Abbé Loth and published in 1879, starts with the following words: "Ce livre, (…), a été composé pour les coeurs bons et pieux qui aiment notre vieille Cathédrale, comprennent son langage et sa

poésie, et goûtent ses souvenirs."[6] The focus here is not on architectural details but on the religious side of the monument, and on how the cathedral affects the visitor spiritually. Indeed, chapter I starts thus: "La Cathédrale de Rouen est un monde; un monde de poésie, de symbolisme, de souvenirs et de traditions, un monument grandiose de tendresse et de foi; c'est une histoire vivante dont chaque pierre est une page."[7] Religious history is present with a chapter on the development of Christianity in Rouen (chap. II) or another on the terrible fate of the cathedral during the Revolution (chap. XXIV). When it comes to the interior (chap. XX), the author is accurate, giving exact figures as well as precise descriptions of the interior. These however remain very Christian: "Le chevet du choeur est incliné à gauche, comme la tête de Notre-Seigneur sur la Croix, selon le symbolisme adopté dans presque toutes les Cathédrales."[8] The book ends on a reminder of the preciousness of the cathedral, and on how important it is to repair and protect it for the future: "Comme nos pères aussi, entourons notre vieille Cathédrale de nos soins, de nos largesses et de notre dévouement. Maintenons intact le trésor qu'ils nous ont légué. Venons en aide à sa pauvreté, réparons les brèches ouvertes par les révolutions et les ravages des ans."[9]

Another Christian approach is that of the chanoine Barré, a great admirer of the cathedral. In 1896, he wrote a fifteen-page pamphlet on the cathedral, which he calls a monument "si imposant et si grandiose", a cathedral "si belle, si grande, si chère à tous ceux qui la connaissent"[10]. The monument is then briefly described over a few pages, as is the Trésor, where he insists on the looting by the Calvinists in 1572, as well as that later operated by the Revolutionaries.

We therefore have, in the various guidebooks to Rouen, a common admiration for the greatness of the city's cathedral, be it a straightforward account of its

architecture and history, or a Christian point of view on the religious monument. This admiration can also be found in novels, especially those of *normand* writers, who like the *normand* painters, as we will see, represented in their work their fascination for the local monument. Although these guidebooks are biased one way or the other, being either lay or Catholic, they could still all be read by anyone for factual information about the cathedral. There is an obvious target audience for each guidebook, but they are certainly still very fluid as far as their readership goes. Virtually anyone could read any of these books and still draw something from them. A parallel can be drawn with the paintings of the cathedral, for even though the messages of the painters may be going one way or the other, several interpretations may be made.

Norman novels: the examples of Madame Bovary *(1857) and* Bel-Ami *(1885)*

Novels obviously present the cathedral in a style completely different from that of guidebook writing: we are here in the presence of naturalism, and the two novelists included in this section have presented Notre-Dame in a very descriptive manner which also emphasizes the greatness and mystery surrounding the medieval monument.

The two great 19th century novelists, Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880) and Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893), included Rouen cathedral in their works. Flaubert included the cathedral in his famous naturalist novel *Madame Bovary*[11]. The author was born and raised in the city, and would have therefore known the cathedral well. The

monument plays in this novel a major role as it is the scene of the first rendez-vous between Emma Bovary and Léon, the young clerk who is about to become her lover.

He arrives first at the rendez-vous, which gives the author the opportunity to place a few sentences depicting Notre-Dame, from the outside to the inside:

> (...) la lumière qui arrivait obliquement sur la cathédrale posait des miroitements à la cassure des pierres grises; une compagnie d'oiseaux tourbillonnaient dans le ciel bleu, autour des clochetons à trèfles (...). La nef se mirait dans les bénitiers pleins, avec le commencement des ogives et quelques portions de vitrail. Mais le reflet des peintures, se brisant au bord du marbre, continuait plus loin, sur les dalles, comme un tapis bariolé. Le grand jour du dehors s'allongeait dans l'église en trois rayons énormes, par les trois portails ouverts. (...) Les lustres de cristal pendaient immobiles. Dans le choeur, une lampe d'argent brûlait; et, des chapelles latérales, des parties sombres de l'église, il s'échappait quelquefois comme des exhalaisons de soupirs, avec le son d'une grille qui retombait, en répercutant son écho sous les hautes voûtes.[12]

The scene is set for the impending meeting: a quiet, somewhat surreal and slightly frightening place where Emma's destiny may change forever. The cathedral, dark and secret, is the right place to hide an affair which should not come out in the open. Furthermore, the religiosity of the place contrasts strongly with the extra-marital affair about to start, giving it an even more sinful aspect.

The young man, whilst waiting for Emma in the cathedral, imagines her in its surroundings, and mixes his loving feelings with religious ones: "L'église, comme un boudoir gigantesque, se disposait autour d'elle; les voûtes s'inclinaient pour recueillir dans l'ombre la confession de son amour; les vitraux resplendissaient pour illuminer son visage, et les encensoirs allaient brûler pour qu'elle apparût comme un ange, dans la fumée des parfums."[13]

The cathedral helps Léon to assimilate Madame Bovary to an angel, an image far from reality[14], but the young man's mind only sees her through love and admiration. Emma finally arrives, but, unsure of what to do, enters a chapel and starts praying: "pour attirer le secours divin, elle s'emplissait les yeux des splendeurs du tabernacle, elle aspirait le parfum des juliennes blanches épanouies dans les grands vases, et

prêtait l'oreille au silence de l'église, qui ne faisait qu'accroître le tumulte de son coeur."[15] The cathedral here seems to somehow encourage Emma to sin, for she does not obtain any divine response, and the silence of the church makes her mixed feelings even more obvious.

After praying, she accepts the guard's offer of a guided tour of the monument, even though Léon does not want to, for "elle se raccrochait de sa vertu chancelante à la Vierge, aux sculptures, aux tombeaux, à toutes les occasions."[16] She still hopes that the religious atmosphere of the cathedral may help her to resist the young man's advances.

A visit of the cathedral follows, where they are shown several curiosities, before Léon, exasperated, manages to take Emma away from the church and onto the *parvis*, from which they leave in a carriage.

What we therefore have in this novel is a cathedral which plays an intrinsic part in the heroine's decision to finally follow her new lover. The particular atmosphere created by Rouen cathedral contributes to the development of the story, by giving Emma the possibility to refuse Léon. On the other hand, with its silence and the presence of the intrusive guard, it also pushes Emma towards Léon, and after the cathedral episode, she becomes his mistress.

As for Maupassant, a *normand* from Dieppe, he mentioned the cathedral in the novel *Bel Ami*:

> La ville apparaissait sur la rive droite, un peu noyée dans la brume matinale, avec des éclats de soleil sur ses toits et ses mille clochers légers, pointus ou trapus, frêles et travaillés comme des bijoux géants, ses tours carrées ou rondes, coiffées de couronnes héraldiques, ses beffrois, ses clochetons, tout le peuple gothique des sommets d'églises, que dominait la flèche aiguë de la cathédrale, surprenante aiguille de bronze, laide, étrange et démesurée, la plus haute qui soit au monde.[17]

The city of Rouen appears to the writer as a superb Gothic jewel with the cathedral dominating the panorama. But even though its spire is judged ugly, the fascination for the building remains, for it is also "étrange et démesurée", and according to the admirer, the highest in the world. This idea is also present in a short story, *Un Normand*, when the author describes Rouen as "la ville aux églises, aux clochers gothiques travaillés comme des bibelots d'ivoire (...). Ici, la flèche de la cathédrale, le plus haut sommet des monuments humains".

We have thus demonstrated how important Rouen cathedral was, especially for local writers. They all conveyed their admiration for 'their' cathedral, a monument which, according to them, had a tremendous importance. If guidebooks were for tourists and not necessarily read by locals, novels by celebrated *normand* writers would have been read by artists. Writers and painters shared a common heritage of Rouen cathedral as a multivalent image in their different kinds of representation. Monet lived in Le Havre; the following section concentrates on his series representing Rouen cathedral, before the third part of this chapter examines how important Notre-Dame de Rouen was in the eyes of the local painters who represented it. Monet's images, as well as the very diverse representations given by a number of other artists, will give an idea of the diversity of meanings carried by one cathedral.

Monet's *Cathédrale de Rouen* (1892-1893)

Monet's *Cathedrals* form a series of 30 paintings all representing Rouen cathedral. They were painted during two stays in the city, between February and mid-April 1892, and then between 15 February and 14 April 1893. The canvases painted during that time were taken away to Giverny, finished off in the artist's studio, and all dated 1894. The paintings were exhibited by the dealer Paul Durand-Ruel in Paris in May 1895.

This series follows from others Monet had already painted earlier, in particular the *Grainstacks* (1888-91) and the *Poplars* (1890-91). He was therefore aware of how the changing light and weather conditions could affect a painting in dramatic ways. But beyond this obvious statement, the following section will help us understand Monet's aims when he settled his easel behind a window opposite Rouen cathedral.

What did he want to represent in these 30 canvases, of which 28 are extremely similar views of the west façade, while the two remaining show the *Cour d'Albane*, a medieval courtyard at the foot of one of the towers (Figs. 81, 82, 83 for the façade, 84 and 85 for the Cour d'Albane)? Monet went to Rouen for two campaigns and painted the cathedral at different times of day, and in various weather conditions. However, two art historians, Paul Hayes Tucker and George Heard Hamilton, both agree to say that the *Cathedrals* series was "not intended to be seen as charting the passage of light across the church's façade with such specificity that one could determine exactly what time of day each represented."[18] Hamilton rejects the various

allegations that Monet's work is "documentary in character, and ape the scientific"[19]. For them, Monet's *Cathedrals* are in the continuity of his previous work. The qualities he had already demonstrated in the *Haystacks* and the *Poplars*, such as the study of light at different times of the day, are developed even further. On another note, Joachim Pissarro rejects the idea that Monet's pictures are purely descriptive[20]. So how can one attempt to describe and define this series?

Hamilton argues that Monet tried to give with his *Cathedrals* "the exhaustive record of his sensations"[21]. It is however difficult to know exactly what Monet wanted to achieve, because he never stated verbally what he wished to do. In his correspondence during his stays in Rouen, Monet remained very vague about his aim: "plus je vais, plus j'ai de mal à rendre ce que je sens (...)"[22], he states in a letter dated 28 March 1893. And a few days later: "Quelle fatalité me prend de m'acharner ainsi après des recherches au-dessus de mes forces."[23]. But he does not state what he is pursuing. However, an important earlier letter, dated 7 October 1890 (when he was working on the *Haystacks*) gives Hamilton an idea about Monet's aim: "je suis de plus en plus enragé du besoin de rendre ce que j'éprouve"[24]. He also stated in the same letter: "Je vois qu'il faut beaucoup travailler pour arriver à rendre ce que je cherche: "l'instantanéité", surtout l'enveloppe, la même lumière répandue partout (...)"[25]. So it seems to be this "envelope", this "ambience" as Hamilton suggests calling it, which matters the most. This view appears to be substantiated by the fact that it is based on Monet's own statements about his work. Hamilton goes further and suggests that the motif ceases to matter, and is replaced by the importance taken by the artist. He becomes the subject and studies his own experience in front of the

cathedral, an experience which varies from one moment to another. With a motif such as a cathedral, a man-made building that does not change or move, the painter can concentrate on his own experience and feelings. This view is shared by Virginia Spate, who states that Monet "could concentrate exclusively on his own perceptions and their transformation into paint"[26]. There is therefore a move from the previous series Monet painted: the locomotives of the *Gare St Lazare* paintings of 1877 were moving objects, and when he painted the *Grainstacks* Monet moved around them. In contrast, the cathedral remains the same and the artist remains at the same place. "What was changing was the perceptual experience of the observer himself"[27], says Hamilton.

Spate calls Monet's quest his "search for truth"[28]. For three years, the artist sought the exact representation of the changing light, making the stable reality of the cathedral disappear. Truth was therefore in the "envelope", in what the painter experienced moment after moment, in the light that made the stone pink or yellow rather than grey. In 1895 two critics (namely André Michel and Georges Clemenceau) saw this vision of reality as "terrifying"[29]. The fact that Monet reduced everything to "a sort of universal palpitation of coloured molecules"[30] was totally new at the time.

Hamilton concludes his analysis by stating that "each painting is only one item in a sequence which is the outward and visible sign of an inward psychological, and hence spiritual, adventure"[31]. They represent "continuous consciousness"[32]. It is important to note that after the *Cathedrals* Monet would only rarely be content with a single picture of a motif. Indeed series such as *Mount Kolsaas* (1895), *Waterloo Bridge* (1903), *Charing Cross Bridge* (1899-1903) and the *Water Lilies* (1916-1926)

followed, proving how essential it had become for Monet to express in his pictures the various feelings, emotions and visions he had had in front of them.

Joachim Pissarro sees another aspect in Monet's *Cathedrals*: the artist represented a building which already represents a certain vision of reality, and this leads to the fact that there is a "definite convergence of themes"[33] between Monet's vision and the Gothic architecture. For both the artist and the builders of cathedrals, reality is a means to express the invisible: the "envelope" for the one, God and His word for the latter. Pissarro notes that "both the Impressionist artist and the Gothic architect look beyond or beneath what they see"[34]. Indeed, Monet himself mentioned to Clemenceau his efforts towards the search of "unknown realities"[35]. Which leads Pissarro to conclude that Monet did not paint the cathedral: what he painted is what was "between the cathedral and himself"[36], the invisible, the air, the light. This division between the motif and the artist is, according to Pissarro, the real subject matter of the series. This joins up with Hamilton and Spate's view, according to which the subject matter of the cathedral was the artist himself. Pissarro adds that there is in Monet's series a recurrent confrontation between the motif of the cathedral and the "envelope", indicating their constant interference: "(...) the sky or air sometimes seems to be piercing through the stone-the air seems to become stone, while the stone itself is vaporizing."[37]Monet himself explained this relation between the motif and the "envelope", when he talked about the *Haystacks*: "For me a landscape hardly exists at all as a landscape, because its appearance is constantly changing; but it lives by virtue of its surroundings – the air and light – which vary continually. (...) To me, only the surroundings give true value to the subject."[38].

Joachim Pissarro also notes that the ethereal is present both in the building and in the paintings. The cathedral as a building is a representation of heaven, while in Monet's series the ethereal is present everywhere, it is an "imminent force", "perspiring through the stone"[39]. Light is also a very important common feature to the cathedral architects and to the painter. The cathedral wants to represent God as light, while Monet sees the cathedral through light. Pissarro concludes his analysis of these various convergent themes by stating that this analogy helps to "address a visual and poetic continuum"[40] between Monet's *Cathedrals* and Rouen cathedral itself. Pissarro's comparisons between the cathedral itself and Monet's pictures are based on several observations of the main features of both the monument and the paintings. However, one can wonder if they are particularly relevant, for it does not seem that Monet took into consideration the religious aspect of the cathedral (an idea developed below).

A recent analysis by Richard Thomson underlines the importance of another approach several critics have mentioned when commenting on Monet's pictures. This is their 'instantaneousness', the momentary captured in the canvases[41]. He connects this idea with the development of snapshot photography, a scientific progress critics of Monet would have been aware of. In 1889 for instance Octave Mirbeau praised Monet's landscapes for the particular time the artist had chosen to represent, saying: "c'est l'instantanéité"[42]. Raymond Bouyer wrote in 1894 in his book *Le Paysage dans l'art* that Monet produced "audacieux instantanés", underlining the word in order to emphasise its importance[43]. Thomson explains how the snapshot idea had become essential at the end of the 19th century, several artists producing images which could be compared with the new technique, and others, such as Toulouse-

Lautrec or Degas, actually using photography themselves. However he argues that Monet's cathedrals are probably not in the snapshot vein. The angle the painter chose, concentrating on the façade rather than the view from the Côte Sainte Catherine or the Rue de l'Epicerie (which he tried but repudiated quickly), means that there is no evidence of modern life or movement in the representations, as there would be in snapshot photographs. Moreover, one cannot see the details of the carvings of the façade, which again would be clearly visible on a photograph. Thomson argues that Monet was not trying to make an *instantané* of the cathedral, but that "he created his own modernity based around the retrieval of sensation via drawn-out painterly processes"[44]. Thomson notices however "a trace of the instantaneous" lingering in one of the paintings shown at Durand-Ruel's in 1895. One of the canvases featured a flock of birds around the tower, and the art historian argues that "perhaps Monet, for all his fascination with adapting his painterly process to evoke the *enveloppe*, for all his 'cult of light', felt the need to make a bow to the *instantané*"[45], possibly the proof that his painting could incorporate that kind of visual modernity. So from this perspective Monet's *Cathedrals* appear not only concerned with the representation of an atmosphere through the light, but also prove that the artist was aware of the new artistic and scientific developments of his time, and that he utilised these in his own work.

On yet another level, Tucker expresses the idea that the *Cathedrals* have a very nationalistic resonance[46], a theme we have already explored earlier in this thesis. A Gothic cathedral is a typically French motif, and one that was revived in the course of the nineteenth century. Viollet le Duc said that the Gothic was "fashioned from

our materials and in our climate, to suit our character."[47] Louis Courajod, the curator of medieval art at the Louvre in the 1890s, claimed that people should turn their interests to the great cathedrals rather than to the ancient world: "Let us loosen the stranglehold that pagan Rome has on us for a second time, so that the nineteenth century will not end without our finding ourselves again completely, openly, and absolutely French."[48]

Also, Tucker recalls that the *Cathedrals* were painted at a time when the French had particularly strong feelings for their nation: they had not forgotten the Franco-Prussian war, did not want their artists to go to Germany for an exhibition in Berlin (in 1895), were infuriated at the idea that French officials were invited to the inaugural ceremony of a monumental canal in Germany and had accepted the invitation. The English were regarded little better: when Orléans celebrated Jeanne d'Arc (two day before the beginning of Monet's exhibition) and allowed the Bishop of Winchester to participate in the ceremonies, observers were outraged. "By choosing to paint one of France's great treasures, a work of art itself, Monet (...) was suggesting his ties to the country's past"[49], notes Tucker. Moreover, Clemenceau asked the then French president, Faure, to buy the series for the nation, which may be a sign of how important it was for the nation to possess images of its great past, but they were not purchased by the state. One should however question whether Monet did want to make a statement about nationalism. Never in his correspondence did he mention such an aspect of the motif. Moreover, he decided to exhibit the *Cathedrals* along with other paintings, a decision probably aimed at making less obvious the link between Rouen cathedral and the nationalist ideas of the time. Tucker suggests that the artist "may have been concerned about how they would be interpreted if seen

without other work"[50]. I therefore believe that Monet did not want to make a political statement with these pictures.

But would there be a possible religious statement in them? Both Tucker and Hamilton wonder if there is in Monet's choice of motif any trace of the religious struggles of the time. They both agree to say that the spiritual dimension of the cathedral does not seem to have had an impact on Monet, who was an agnostic and whose friends were in favour of the secularisation of French culture[51]. Indeed, Tucker even mentions that the painter "did not even enter the Cathedral until he was well into his project and then only to attend a 300-person choral recital to which he had been given a free ticket."[52] Hamilton adds that Monet's cathedrals have no cross, and wonders if Monet deliberately avoided this specifically religious symbol[53]. However, Tucker also argues in his other work on the *Cathedrals* that Monet "was placing himself squarely"[54] within the religious discourse of his time by choosing to paint a religious building. For him, the *Cathedrals* can be read both as nationalistic monuments and as religious buildings, and are "the perfect subject for *ralliement* France"[55], a subject already evoked earlier in this thesis in the context of Catholic paintings. The religiosity of the cathedrals was acknowledged by certain contemporaries reviewing the 1895 exhibition. The symbolist critic Eon described the pictures as "a phantom cathedral... mysterious and mute... and (...) the almost fantastic impression [he] has been able to draw from the Cathedral of Rouen adds a new and truly curious note of mysticism to his glory"[56]. Eon also described the *Cathedrals* as "spiritual", whilst Pissarro quotes him comparing the cathedral to a "dazzling shrine"[57], and the houses in the Cour d'Albane to "weary pilgrims (...)"

who "seem to wait until they are asked to tell us the pious feelings of the past centuries"[58]. So there are definitely arguments in favour of a certain kind of religiosity being attached to the paintings.

But in his article on the series, *Révolution de Cathédrales*, published on 20 May 1895 at the time of the Durand-Ruel exhibition, Clemenceau gives his own opinion on the problem. He puts art in general, and the *Cathedrals* in particular, above religion itself: "Je m'aperçois alors que pendant que mon noble curé se met à la torture pour m'ébahir de miracles qui ne sont pas, je vis, moi, au soin d'un perpétuel prodige qui m'affole et m'enivre de miraculeuses réalités."[59] On the other hand, among modern writers, Spate thinks that Monet "severed (...) the cathedral from the meanings history had given it"[60], so that it exists only in the present, for the one who looks at it, and has no particular religious resonance. She adds that although Monet was a free-thinker, his *Cathedrals* are "mute in any explicit ideological sense"[61]. However, the fact that they represent the cathedral simply as a form, subjected to various lightning effects, ranged his paintings with those who defended nature as the new faith of the time. But here again, let us not forget that Monet did not want to exhibit the *Cathedrals* on their own, no doubt for fear that otherwise they would be seen as a political statement. I would therefore think that the religiosity of the motif did not have an extreme importance in Monet's eyes. I would rather conclude, on the basis of Hamilton's interpretation of the *Cathedrals*, themselves based on Monet's own words, that Rouen cathedral provided the painter with a motif that would fulfil his artistic objectives, not a political agenda, and that in that sense his representations of a cathedral are very different from many we have seen so far.

Tucker argues that the fact that the Gothic was seen as an "organic style, grounded in nature and uniquely artful"[62] was very important to Monet. Rather than focusing on the religiosity of the subject, Monet "emphasizes the wonders of nature"[63]. He sees the *Cathedrals* as a triumph of nature over dogmas, although the latter were the cathedral's original raison d'être. Continuing on this idea of nature, Tucker insists on the fact that viewers at the time of the exhibition "were struck with how vital the building became in Monet's hands"[64]. The cathedral seems an "animated object", made alive by the intensity of light. We are not in front of a building any more, but in front of an almost living object. This is also the case in many of Monet's drawings of the time, when he was sketching the cathedral. "The church appears to be a vital kind of growth that rises and falls, trembles and swells"[65], thinks Tucker. Indeed, Monet himself said that "tout change, quoique pierre"[66]. According to Tucker, several factors make the cathedral look even more "organic"[67]: the houses included in eight of the canvases, the birds that appear in two of them, and the people added to another. Also, Monet "emphasised the building's irregularities far more than its symmetries"[68], thus creating the impression that it was more natural than man-made. Tucker even adds that "the whole façade appears to be moving, the lower half to the left, the upper half to the right"[69]. Joachim Pissarro notes that in the two views of the Cour d'Albane, there is also a strong emphasis on turning the buildings to life: "there is a deeply human resonance to the image: the tall, imposing tower is plotted in the midst of a heap of houses milling with life, pierced with recesses and windows. These windows were painted by Monet in all sorts of colours (...) thus formidably animating the whole surface of the painting (...)."[70] (Figs 84 and 85).

Clemenceau, in his article *Révolution de Cathédrales*, underlines this life of the stone too: "La merveille de la sensation de Monet, c'est de voir vibrer la pierre et de nous la donner vibrante, baignée des vagues lumineuses qui se heurtent en éclaboussures d'étincelles. C'en est fini de la toile immuable de mort. Maintenant la pierre elle-même vit, on la sent mutante de la vie qui précède en la vie qui va suivre. Elle n'est plus comme immobilisée pour le spectateur. Elle passe. On la voit passer."[71] On the same level, Spate notes the contrast between the "durable nature" of the building and the "ambiguous, fugitive, fragmentary"[72] vision presented by Monet, before adding that the artist treated the cathedral as "a natural phenomenon shaped by time"[73].

Tucker goes even further however, and sees in the *Cathedrals* "anthropomorphic qualities"[74]: the building seems to shiver in the cold morning, stretching its tower upwards as if to greet the first rays of the sun. Monet turned a stone building into a human being.

Because of the numerous arguments given to support the idea that the cathedral becomes alive on Monet's canvases, this idea appears very convincing. It seems therefore that Monet went a lot further than simply the appearance of the building, and the different kinds of weathers, in order to give it a life of its own. Thanks to his use of colour to represent light and the importance of the brushwork giving texture to the motif, the cathedral detaches itself from the canvas and begins a life of its own. Indeed, the way in which Monet manipulated the paint in the *Cathedrals* was commented upon by several critics too. For Tucker, the use of paint[75] is "almost sculptural", thus recreating the surface of the cathedral, with its various sculptural works. A critic quoted by Joachim Pissarro describes the texture of the surfaces as

"that of stone and mortar"[76]. Spate expresses the same idea when she refers to the paintings as "material object[s]"[77]. The cathedral is thus recreated on the canvases the way Monet experienced it.

So the cathedral Monet presents is the result of a sensory experience. The atmosphere, the 'envelope', surrounding the building are probably more important than the building itself. But standing in front of these pictures, close to the canvas, one can see that the way the paint is applied participates in the experience too by actually showing the viewer the texture of the object experienced. The thick layers of paint, the very rough aspect of the canvas have a definite impact on the spectator, especially if the latter is used to seeing well-finished academic paintings, as would have been the case in Monet's days: not only does the thick paint give the cathedral represented a more obvious physical presence, it also tells the viewer of the intensive labour the artist has put into the picture. The paint carries Monet's efforts and constant reworkings on the canvas, making these even more highly personal pictures. When standing back from the picture, the viewer then sees the whole of the scene and can be enveloped by the atmosphere emanating from it. Each picture is a unique combination of colours which recreate each moment Monet spent in front of the cathedral, and of course every single one of these moments is completely unique. The viewer is transported into these moments thanks to the artist, so that they can be re-experienced for ever. This is of course paradoxical, for Monet wanted to capture the instant, the ephemeral, but once on the canvas the instant becomes fixed. But this is also the paradox presented by the popular snapshot photographs of his time. As far as the use of colour is concerned, Monet showed through these *Cathedrals* the power

colour and light can have when they completely embrace a motif, turning it into a multi-faceted object of admiration. Rouen cathedral appears therefore in his series both as an object which can be experienced by the mind (through the creation of the particular atmosphere of each canvas) as well as the eye (seeing the thick and irregular layers of paint) and even possibly the touch, if one were able to feel these canvases in a tactile way. The cathedral does not appear however to carry any particular political or religious message; Monet's aim was to experiment with Impressionism even further than before, and this new motif of a man-made cliff lent itself to the project of creating a new sort of impression for the viewer to experience.

The Rouen painters

If Monet, Pissarro (who will be studied in the next chapter), and before them Turner (Fig. 86) are amongst the best known of the artists who painted the cathedral of Rouen, several other, lesser-known painters, also chose the same subject in the period which interests us. This section aims at presenting these painters and their work, focusing on their views of Rouen cathedral and the various ways in which they represented the monument. Through an analysis of the personal background of these artists, their techniques, the views of the cathedral they chose, I want to show the many different approaches the very same monument can attract. I will also propose that even though these approaches may be from many different angles, from the *parvis* to the countryside surrounding the city, they all tend to present Rouen cathedral in a rather similar light, that of a monument clearly belonging to its city and its surroundings.

I will start with the paintings which show the cathedral from the same angle that Monet also chose: the *parvis*. Then I will continue with the views of the cathedral in the context of the city, the port and in relation with the *Rouennais*, before looking at the paintings which feature the cathedral in a much broader panorama including the countryside. This approach will therefore give us the opportunity to compare various views of the cathedral in similar settings, painted in different styles and at different periods between 1870 and 1914.

The painters I have selected for this section are all local to the Rouen area[78], and therefore possess strong personal links with the city. It appears indeed, and for obvious reasons, that the local painters chose viewpoints that tend to be more original, more personal than those of their non-local counterparts. Monet for instance represented Rouen cathedral only from three viewpoints (the Côte Sainte Catherine, the Rue de l'Épicerie and the *parvis*), which were the most obvious ones for someone who was not a native of the city. Pissarro too did not venture deep into the country or into small streets that he was not familiar with; instead he remained close to the 'traditional' views. In contrast, many of the Rouen painters present in this chapter went further than the obvious, away from the tourist paths. Joseph Delattre and Albert Lebourg explored the harbour, Léon-Jules Lemaître looked at the people of the city and, like Henri Vignet, went deep into the small medieval streets. We therefore have here a more personal view of the cathedral in its city, but a view each painter developed in his own way.

Another fact to bear in mind is that most of these artists belonged to the so-called École de Rouen, a group close to the Impressionists, whose work was done "en

plein-air". The École de Rouen is strongly connected to the geographical situation of the *Normand* city itself, as the critic Georges Dubosc, the leading newspaper critic in Rouen at the beginning of the 20th century, explained in 1914[79]. This point of view also explains why the painters native to the Rouen area were aware of the particular light conditions in their city: "l'École de Rouen est née, certes, de l'attrait qu'exerce sur tous les artistes la vieille cité d'art, dont elle arbore le nom, mais plus encore de l'atmosphère, de l'ambiance aérienne, légèrement brumeuse et humide, qui enveloppe toutes les rives de la Seine et se condense magiquement à ce détour du fleuve, dans un cercle de coteaux et de forêts."[80] The origins of the Ecole de Rouen may also well be connected with a regional pride which meant that the local artistic life was supported by local patrons. A rich city at the end of the 19th century thanks to the activity of the harbour, Rouen would have had a number of *bourgeois* rich enough to buy the production of local artists showing their city, a city they were presumably proud of. Also, Rouen boasted a local *Salon* and a *Société des artistes rouennais*, created in 1906, proofs of the vitality of the local art scene and the pride for the local culture.

We will therefore see in this chapter a very particular way of depicting the city of Rouen and its cathedral, by those who were directly attached to it. What did the cathedral represent for them? Was it a religious symbol? A local monument to be proud of? A reminder of the past? And, just as Flaubert linked the ancient cathedral to a contemporary story, did the Normand painters place the monument in their time? And if they did, how was this possible?

Pierre Dumont

Monet was by the 1890s a significant figure; it is interesting by contrast to turn to the little-known Pierre Dumont (1884-1936), who moved to Rouen with his family in 1884 as a baby and was interested in the arts from a very young age. He met Robert Pinchon and Marcel Duchamp in his lycée and the three of them attended art classes. In spite of his father's opposition to his artistic career, who wanted his son to become a doctor, Pierre Dumont started painting. He had to flee to Paris to avoid his father's discontent, but, devoid of money, he nearly died of hunger. His father came for him and finally accepted his son's ambition. The young man exhibited his first works in 1906, but they proved not to be to everyone's taste: "Le public est injuste pour ces toiles brutales et crues qu'il ne comprend pas toujours. On ne doit point bafouer ces tons impuissamment distribués car c'est besogne lâche que railler un artiste qui se trompe"[81], wrote a contemporary critic. A few months later, eighteen of his paintings were exhibited and showed that "son tempérament fougueux et de coloriste s'affirment nettement."[82] He continued exhibiting and again the critics insisted on the audacity of his technique: one commented in the *Journal de Rouen* on his "tempérament d'avant-garde, plein d'audace et de crânerie"[83]. Still in 1906, Dumont decided to create a salon parallel to the Rouen official one, with which he had grown disappointed. He wanted his salon to be much more representative of the pictorial evolution of the time. Gathering thirty artists and writers, their first exhibition was shown in Rouen at the end of the year. The preface of the catalogue shows the credo driving Dumont at the time: "Ceux qui évoluent méritent l'attention à défaut de la sympathie. La leur refuser, c'est bien nier au brin d'herbe le droit de pousser, au

grain le droit de germer… Se complaise d'ailleurs qui voudra dans les négations: la nature et l'art passeront outre!"[84]

After a couple more exhibitions, "dès qu'il se sent assez mûr pour cela, il s'installe devant la cathédrale normande"[85], notes Gilbert de Knyff in a book about the painter. This was a major step in his career, and one which helped him being compared to a great master: de Knyff adds that "tout au long de sa vie il [Dumont] épiera les jeux de la lumière sur les masses de pierre sculptée. Il ne cessera qu'après avoir réalisé une suite de vues de la cathédrale de Rouen dont je dis sans crainte de me tromper qu'elle approche en importance pour l'histoire de l'art la magistrale série exécutée par Claude Monet."[86] Dumont painted at least fourteen large canvases of the cathedral, either from the first floor of the Brasserie Paul, opposite the monument, or from the neighbouring cobbler's balcony.[87] He showed three of the first ones in December 1908 in the window of the Galerie Legrip[88]. It is possible that two of the three undated paintings of Rouen cathedrals now in the collections of the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen were part of this group. Another cathedral canvas is mentioned as being part of a collective exhibition the following year, but it is possible that he used one of the works from the previous show. However, it is difficult to date the Musée des Beaux-Arts cathedrals as several others were shown to the public in July 1909. Another cathedral was part of a 1912 exhibition at the Galerie La Boétie in Paris. But 12 'cathédrales de Rouen' were to be seen at a large show of his works in 1913 in the capital, so it is indeed very difficult to date the paintings which I am studying here. Only one of them, the sunny view of the façade, is dated by Gilbert de Knyff as being a work from 1912. The two other works

commented on in this section do however almost certainly fit within the 1870-1914 timescale I have fixed.

All three paintings of the cathedral show the monument in a ¾ angle very similar to that Monet had previously used, and since Dumont studied painting it is very likely that he would have heard about or maybe seen pictures of Monet's works (Fig. 87, 88 and 89). This of course may have helped him choose this particular motif, but I think that the fact that Dumont was a *Rouennais* probably explains his attraction for the main monument of his hometown. Besides, he also painted other scenes of the city, for instance *Rue de l'Épicerie* and *Pont Corneille*, which were exhibited in 1906, or *La Seine à Rouen* (undated) and *Les Ponts de Rouen* (undated), and produced a series of paintings of Rouen between 1924 and 1927, proving that the city was indeed a source of inspiration throughout his career. Furthermore, his fascination for cathedrals and churches in general appears to have been very strong, as Notre-Dame de Paris and other religious buildings features largely in his work too. In 1924 for instance he travelled through Northern France and painted the cathedrals of Senlis, Beauvais, Amiens, Meaux and Reims; and at the 1944 retrospective exhibition of his work at the Galerie Denis, nine "Notre-Dame de Paris" were presented along with fourteen Rouen cathedrals and a number of town and village churches[89].

The three paintings I want to comment on strike the viewer by the boldness of their lines and that of the colours the artist chose, reminding the viewer Dumont used to be a peripheral part of the Fauve movement. The presence of the cathedral is extremely strong thanks to these two elements as well as the fact that it occupies

most of the canvas. The vastness of the monument is further emphasised by the small size of the human figures represented on the left-hand corner, on the *parvis*, and by the fact that the building does not entirely fit into the canvas: the top of the towers are cut, disappearing into the sky, reaching higher than is possible to see. This is particularly obvious on the third painting, where the left-hand tower's roof is cut lower than on the two others, and where most of the right-handside tower has disappeared.

However, even though these three paintings look very similar in their composition, they exhale different moods, according to the colours the painter chose to use to show the light falling on the cathedral. Dumont had a "passion (...) pour la lumière dont son oeil percevait les moindres variations."[90] The first painting is a very sunny, bright representation of Rouen cathedral (Fig. 87). The main colour here is a bright yellow, accompanied by the red of the portal doors and the strokes of various colours used for the figures on the *parvis*. I believe this shows the cathedral in a very positive light: not only is it shining, but the figures and the houses on the left-hand side add life to the scene. The centre of the painting is made of the rose above the main portal, and its green, red and orange tones intensify the positive mood of the painting.

The second painting of the façade is very similar, once again a bold, bright view of the cathedral (Fig.88). The mood here is however slightly different, for even though the sun is still shining, a contrast between the white strokes used to paint the monument and the darker corner of the right-hand side portal and tower make the cathedral appear somehow menacing. The weather too has changed compared with the first painting: here it is cloudy and even perhaps stormy, a less positive effect.

The cathedral however could simply be standing guard over its people who are passing by on the *parvis*, and on the city as a whole, since a few houses are visible on the left, nestled on the side of the massive monument.

But the mood changes radically in the third Dumont painting, where the cathedral is very dark, against a cloudy sky (Fig. 89). Its dark mass, made mostly of dark browns and greens occupies most of the painting, whilst the *parvis* is also very gloomy. Here only three or four figures may be seen, and they are painted black. A few houses on the left are lighter, and together with the greenish/yellowish sky make the sombre mass of the cathedral detach itself. This is a dark, imposing view of the building which almost seems to crush its surroundings because of its sheer size and the power the darkness gives it.

Dumont therefore shows that Rouen cathedral may be painted in completely different ways according to the atmospheric conditions surrounding it. This is of course reminiscent of Monet's work, but I believe Dumont's work is much more down to earth, as his cathedrals do not have the eerie, almost unreal feel Monet attributed to his own cathedrals. Here, with Dumont, we see the cathedral as being very much part of the city, and as having a strong link with it, whether as a guardian figure or as a more menacing one. The cathedral is real, rooted in the Rouen soil, an intrinsic part of its surroundings. The magic has given way to the concrete, real world. So even though we have a viewpoint similar to Monet's, and a depiction of the atmospheric conditions, the local painter did not want to give the viewer a series of impressions on the various changes of light and weather, but wanted the viewer to see 'his' cathedral as a real object, a part of the city to admire and be proud of.

The 'modern' element should also be taken into account in Dumont's work. Impressionism had by 1908 become a well-established mode, and by that date Dumont himself had passed through a Fauvist period (even though obvious traces of this remain in the boldness of his colours). His local cathedral, combined with the example of Monet, gave him an opportunity to take his ideas further, in a very personal style, qualified by de Knyff as a "style instinctif, affirmant de plus en plus de personnalité, d'originalité"[91]. This is not therefore the way in which everyone would see Rouen cathedral, it is very much Dumont's cathedral, an object close to his heart thanks to which he can experiment with modernity. Like Monet, though, he uses the old medieval building in order to progress towards a new vision, thus anchoring his cathedral not only in the past or in the present of his city, but also certainly in modern life. Of course his style is not as modern as that of Matisse when he painted a near-abstract representation of Notre-Dame de Paris in 1914 (Chapter Six), but it is important to see that several artists chose the great cathedrals in order to take modern painting even further. We will have the opportunity to come back to the idea of modern painting at the end of this chapter, with Suzanne Duchamp and a Cubist cathedral by the very same Dumont.

Because a cathedral is a religious building, one has to wonder too whether Dumont's cathedrals have anything religious about them. The cross above the central rose is present on all three paintings, so there was no deliberate attempt to hide it. However, I do not think that it was Dumont's aim to show his cathedral as a place of worship. He was more interested in the changing tones of the stones and in the overall impression the cathedral had on him and on the city. There is no obvious

invitation to enter the church, as the impression is to be had from outside, where the city belongs. This is a cathedral in the life of the city, belonging to the city as a whole, not one for the inner life of individuals.

The idea we discussed here that Rouen cathedral appears to be inherent to the city appears to be a recurrent theme for the Rouen painters, who have certainly always seen 'their' cathedral as a natural part of Rouen. I will explore this idea further in the following sections, in order to show that - whether they chose to depict the medieval town, the modern harbour, the activity of the modern town or the countryside around the city - Rouen cathedral almost always appears as an essential element strongly connected to its surroundings.

The Cathedral in the city of Rouen

There are quite a number of works produced by *rouennais* artists which place the cathedral of Rouen in its element: the city surrounding it and the activity taking place there. These various paintings can be put into the following categories: the views of the old town, the harbour views and those which focus on the people of Rouen. We will see how the cathedral relates to each situation.

The old town: a site in peril

The various paintings representing the cathedral in the context of the medieval city can only be fully understood if one is aware of the controversy surrounding this area at the end of the 19th century. A book entitled *Rouen Pittoresque*, published in

1886, reflects with much regret on the changes the old town underwent in recent years. The various authors, writing on different aspects of the city, tell of their disappointment with the new appearance of the city, and lament the loss of all that made Rouen so picturesque. For instance, "les quais ont été mis au goût du jour. Jadis, les vieilles portes, les murs d'enceinte leur devaient donner un aspect tout à fait réjouissant; aujourd'hui, les maisons à cinq étages y sont alignées comme des grenadiers à la parade (...)"[92], deplores one of the authors. Another chapter entitled "Autour de la cathédrale" underlines the beauty of this old district whilst reminding the reader that the "démolisseurs" will no doubt carry out their terrible work there too:

> Un des coins les plus intéressants du Vieux Rouen est à coup sûr la partie de la ville qui avoisine la Cathédrale; c'est aussi celui qui a eu le moins à souffrir des procédés modernes d'embellissement des cités. Hâtons-nous donc d'en parler, car les temps sont proches et l'armée des démolisseurs qui a renversé le vieux quartier de la Renelle et qui vient de faire disparaître Martainville et le clos Saint-Marc (rien de Venise) s'avance sournoisement par la rue Grand-Pont. Il est à présumer que, lorsqu'elle aura mis à mal cette antique voie centrale, elle cherchera à exercer ses talents dévastateurs quelque part ailleurs et que, cédant à la mode du jour, elle voudra laïciser ces pauvres vieilles baraques qui ne se tiennent debout que par un miracle et qui ne doivent leur existence qu'à l'espèce de protection que la grande et majestueuse Cathédrale contre laquelle on les a groupées, semble leur accorder.[93]

The same chapter contains another lament on the end of the Vieux Rouen, a complaint similar to those expressed by Hugo who opposed Baron Haussmann's rebuilding of Paris in the 1850s and 1860s, and encapsulating the feelings of those opposed to the modern development of the city:

> Rouen s'en va! Rouen est parti! La fuite des brocanteurs cessant de faire leurs étalages sur les ponts de Robec, c'est la fin du Vieux-Rouen. Adieu la vue si curieuse de la rue des Boucheries-Saint-Ouen, adieu les maisons et les cours gothiques de la rue Martainville, adieu les coins chers aux artistes, adieu même les rives de la Seine autrefois si vantées et qu'on emprisonne maintenant dans des quais ou des digues immenses![94]

The very same idea of loss was already expressed in a picture probably made in 1857 by Eugène Balan (1809-1858), an artist "très attaché à la ville de Rouen"[95],

according to François Lespinasse. He represented on an opaque watercolour the old houses around the Cour d'Albane, at the foot of the cathedral, being demolished in 1857 (Fig. 90). The impression of loss and utter sadness is conveyed here through the emptiness replacing the destroyed buildings, the rubble in the foreground, the medieval house on the right now standing on its own, probably awaiting the same fate, and the complete absence of figures. This is a scene of demolition, of death even, as there does not seem to be any hope for these old vernacular buildings. The opinion of the artist is clear: the past is being destroyed to leave room for a so-called modernity which has no place in such a historic, picturesque city.

A historian confirms in the *Histoire de Rouen* (1979) that there was indeed a quarrel between the modernists and the amateurs of the old city during the 19th century. Rouen was a "ville-taudis pour les uns, ville-musée pour les autres"[96]; the art lovers tended to overlook the real problems of the city, whilst the administrators often ignored its real beauty. For the latter, "le passé gênait le présent et l'avenir", according to Camille Enlart[97]. After a series of works carried out from 1829 onwards, including the building of the Pont de Pierre, the construction of the new quays and their blocks of flats, the building of two new main streets involving the demolishing of a thousand houses as well as that of three old churches, the result was the following, and the anger of the ones who wanted to defend their old city can be easily understood:

> Un Rouen singulièrement changé, plus sain, plus fonctionnel certes, mais aussi appauvri de beaucoup de ses richesses, enlaidi de trolleys, de façades plâtrées, d'immeubles passe-partout, bref avec ce visage à la fois moderne et banal dont les cartes postales de la "belle époque" restituent l'image et qui subsistera à peu près tel quel jusqu'aux incendies de 1940.[98]

The paintings dealt with in the following sections are representations of the old city of Rouen, so one wants to bear in mind the fact that the setting of these scenes

was threatened to disappear. It is therefore very possible that the painters wanted not only to make a statement about the beauty of their old city and thus the need to conserve it intact, but also keep a record of these ancient quarters in the likely case they would be demolished.

The Rue de l'Épicerie: Dumont and Delaunay

These two paintings are the works of two natives of Rouen who would have certainly known this street and this view of the cathedral very well, would have liked it and certainly wanted to preserve it (Figs. 91 and 92). I have already mentioned in the previous section Dumont's biographical details; Marcel Delaunay (1876-1959) was born in Rouen and, like Dumont, was very much involved with the art scene of his hometown, where he created the 'Société des Artistes Rouennais'. He painted local scenes and his love for Normandy was summarised in these words by François Lespinasse: the painter was "très attaché à Rouen, à la terre normande"[99]. It seems however that his work, rich in local scenes, was not necessarily highly regarded by local critics. An article from the *Rouen-Gazette* (about an exhibition held by the painter in 1911), a short-lived art weekly publication, stated that even though "la vision du peintre est fort délicate" and his grey tones inspired by Pissarro, "c'est de l'impressionnisme fatigué qui, peu à peu, se débilite et s'en va."[100] The critic adds that the painter has become "un organisateur, un simple metteur en scène". This may explain why he chose the Rue de l'Épicerie as a subject, a well-known scene he knew would please the public and could be sold to amateurs of the old Rouen.

Dumont and Delaunay's views of the same subject, the *Rue de l'Épicerie* leading to the cathedral, are in several aspects very similar: both show the quaint medieval houses along the narrow street and a few figures walking about, and both have the massive cathedral as a background to the scene. Both paintings are colourful too: for instance Dumont uses yellow, light brown and strokes of green for the cathedral, the right-hand side roofs are red, the advert on the side of a house on the right is blue, green, yellow and red, whilst the figures on the street are strokes of purple, black, green or orange. Delaunay's scene is vivid too, with splashes of orange, red and blue on the first house in the foreground, but the rest of the colours are more muted with pale pinks and shades of light blue. The cathedral itself is a cold blue/grey against a white and pale blue sky. These various colours are important because they give these two scenes their particular atmosphere: whilst Dumont's painting appears to produce an idea of warmth and happiness, Delaunay's is colder, more restrained and therefore somehow less inviting. Dumont's colourful old street, backed by a luminous cathedral gives an impression of liveliness which is not present in the other painting. For Delaunay, there seems to be a certain stiffness in this scene, underlined by the vertical lines of the tall houses and that of the cathedral, and also by the viewpoint chosen by the artist: whilst Dumont paints from the side of the street, therefore emphasising its curve to the left, Delaunay shows it from the middle and therefore makes it appear more or less straight.

However, going further into details proves that Delaunay's work may not be as cold and uninviting as it first seems. The main theme shared by these two paintings is the timelessness of the scene they represent. Apart from the adverts visible on the right-hand side house in Delaunay's work, nothing indicates that this is the 20th

century. The houses and the cathedral look just as they would have centuries before, and because of the absence of detailing in their clothing, the people on the street could well belong to another century too. There are no carriages or anything modern. Hence the impression of peace and calm arising from both paintings. The role of the cathedral here is very important in this feeling of tranquillity: in both works the monument appears to be guarding the street and its atmosphere. Its colours blending with those used for the rest of the painting, the cathedral definitely belongs to both scenes as a sort of benevolent figure. Even though its sheer size could make it somehow threatening, both painters represent it as a friendly figure through the use of colour and light. The cathedral we have in these two scenes is an integral part of what is still a medieval city and as such seems to stand guard and watch over the old streets of Rouen. We certainly have here two examples of how the old Rouen was seen by art and history lovers: it is quaint, peaceful, possibly a reminder of better times, when modernity was not threatening to invade such a tranquil area.

It is important however to mention here the fact that Delaunay's broadly handled, almost synthetic style is still rather modern for 1914. I believe that the modernism of his style actually reinforces even further the idea of history present in the *Rue de l'Épicerie*. Painted with a modern technique, it emphasises the age of the scene represented, even creating a sort of time barrier between the contemporary viewer looking at it and the medieval street and cathedral. One can then realise the beauty and tranquillity of the past, and how important it would be to conserve the old Rouen as it is.

The cathedral in the medieval streets

Very similar impressions from those in the two *Rue de l'Épicerie* can be had from Léon-Jules Lemaître's painting of the Rue Damiette, another old street near the cathedral (Fig. 93). Lemaître (1850-1905) was another Norman painter and was very attracted by impressionism and the theories of 'plein airisme'. He painted the old Rouen, "où il va exceller en une note grise et délicate"[101], and is known mostly for his "vues de vieilles rues de Rouen et ses paysages des environs"[102]. The1890 painting studied here represents the old rue Damiette, situated very near the cathedral, and even though modern times are present in the umbrella carried by the woman in the foreground, the rest of the scene could once again well be a few centuries old. The medieval houses occupy both sides of the street whilst the cathedral's silhouette, shrouded in mist, rises above. It is again a friendly presence, thanks to the use of greys, which unite the houses, the street, the cathedral and the sky in the same tone. This forms a very harmonious ensemble. The rue Damiette had been previously represented in *Rouen Pittoresque* in 1886. A drawing by Maxime Lalanne (executed in 1884) shows the street at an angle very similar to Lemaître's[103] (Fig. 94). The woman in the foreground, on the right-hand side, even carries a basket, exactly like in Lemaître's painting, whilst on the left-hand side a very similar apron-clad figure can also be seen. One has to wonder whether Lemaître knew this illustration and could have been inspired by it to paint his scene. We cannot answer this question, but it is a certainty that a number of people regretted the gradual disappearance of the old Rouen, and that therefore such drawings or paintings would certainly have found a buyer. Moreover, these two pictures indicate that certain

views seem to have become clichés of a 'changeless' Rouen, and that they were repeated by artists in various media.

As late as 1912 another 'medieval' scene was painted by Henri Vignet, representing the two towers of the cathedral, as well as part of the nave, from a courtyard on the side, which is perhaps the *Cour d'Albane* painted by Monet (Fig. 95). Vignet (1857-1920) was another native of Rouen, who followed classes at the city's Académie de Peinture et de Dessin. The old Rouen was a favourite subject for him and he is decribed as having "peint ou dessiné la plus complète collection de coins du vieux Rouen"[104]. In 1889 for instance he sent fifteen panels representing the medieval quarters to the Société des Arts competition, and after several years living in Paris he came back to his native city in 1908 where he went back to painting the old streets and the cathedral. The critic seems to have had mixed feelings about his work, if one can judge from the literary *Rouen-Gazette* article by Jean Laurier published about the artist in 1911. The artist is praised for his "indéniable sensibilité" and for the way he represented the old town in "cette ambiance particulière enveloppant si souvent la ville, (...) ce bleuissement de l'air qui semble amplifier les masses de nos clochers et de nos tours". However, his style was considered old-fashioned: the critic thinks Vignet "a fait appel pour la réalisation de ses oeuvres, à des moyens déclassés maintenant, à des facilités de doigts dans la souplesse de l'exécution qui laissent trop voir que seul l'aspect superficiel des choses a été effleuré." He carries on regretting to see Vignet "s'immobiliser encore dans le culte de l'image non approfondie des choses", using "[des] tons maigres" which remain "à l'état d'ébauche", and believes that the study of light, developed by the

Impressionists, seems to have left the painter indifferent. For the critic, Vignet's paintings only carry "le souci de l'anecdote", in other words he is a painter of the *pittoresque* rather than an artist following or developing a particular style[105].

This criticism can certainly be applied to the painting we are studying here, especially if one looks at the very muted colours used throughout. The 'anecdotal' side is obvious even though this is a work devoid of any figures, for several elements insist on the medieval tone of the scene: one can easily see the well in the foreground, as well as the old house just under the tower. The scaffolding on the cathedral, present because of restoration works, can even remind the viewer of the construction of the monument. The colours are muted, the cathedral is a mix of blue, green and grey against a very light purple and pink sky. Beyond the obvious criticism of dullness exposed earlier, these tones can also indicate tranquillity. Here there is no doubt that the artist succeeds in creating a particular atmosphere through a well-chosen use of colour. I also believe this is a picture of stability: the cathedral is solidly anchored in the old town and in time. In a calm, unchanged environment it still stands as it has done for so long. In modern, changing times old monuments such as this do not change and show the strength of the past, and possibly also that of religion, represented through the cathedral.

However, it is also possible to interpret this painting in an opposite manner. The cathedral, under its scaffolding, can be seen as a crumbling monument to a religion which itself has crumbled. The absence of any figures could show the desertion of churches, whilst the medieval atmosphere may simply mean that the cathedral does not belong to the 20th century but to ancient times, and has nothing to do with modern living. There could also possibly be a nostalgic theme here: the damaged

cathedral can be a reminder of better times when it was still an important monument for the community, and so was Christianity. The deserted courtyard and unused well could be a reminder of times when this place would have been bustling with activity and the muted colours add to the rather gloomy atmosphere of the modern face of the courtyard. Moreover, the twilight of the pink sky could perhaps indicate that of the Church.

I do believe however that even though these various interpretations are all possible readings, the fact that the cathedral is still standing high and proud (even though it is injured), the cross on top of the tower reaching for the sky, could be an indication that it still has a possible future in modern times. The pink sky in this case would not be that of twilight but of a new dawn, and the painting's *pittoresque* quality an indication of the cathedral's significance over the continuum of time.

So the cathedral represented in its 'natural' environment of the old city of Rouen can be the bearer of several conflicting messages on its own fate and on that of the Church. The medieval city can be seen either as an ideal, happier place, or on the contrary as old-fashioned, deserted and crumbling under the weight of the years. So what happens if the cathedral is represented not in these old surroundings but in the modern ones of the active harbour? Is the cathedral in this case still a symbol of the past or can it take part in the modern life epitomised by the port of Rouen? In other words, how can the modernity of the port and the old monument be united in a painting?

The Cathedral and the harbour

The context: Rouen harbour

In order to understand why so many paintings represent Rouen harbour, I want to demonstrate how important it was to the life of the city at the period we are looking at. This is no ordinary river port but one which saw massive technical improvements over the years, explaining why it became part of one of France's essential commercial routes to the capital. Faced on an everyday basis by the massive development of their harbour, the local painters took an interest in it, and unsurprisingly made it the subject of a large number of works.

In 1880, Rouen was the fourth French port and grew to becoming the second behind Marseilles for tonnage in 1906[106]. After several improvement periods from 1875 onwards, the harbour had become a modern one by 1913, including 45 hydraulic cranes, 20 electric ones, more than 6 kilometres of quays, all lit up by electric lights. Between 1894 and 1913 alone, the length of the quays increased by 50% and the total tonnage went up 30%[107]. This prosperity meant that the *bourgeois* of Rouen had enough money to buy paintings, and probably paintings representing local or harbour scenes. This in turn would have encouraged the *rouennais* artists to produce local scenes.

The harbour itself must have been a rather exciting sight, with ships disembarking merchandise from all over Europe and sometimes further afield: coal from Great Britain, wood from Scandinavia, wines from Spain and Algeria, grains and flour from Russia to cite but a few[108]. Between 1895 and 1900, there were an

average of 2,600 ships entering the harbour every year[109]. In 1920, so only a few years after the paintings we will look at were executed, the port was described thus:

(...) bravez, s'il le faut, la boue noire ou la poussière noire; regardez, s'il se peut, sans grimace, la laideur des chantiers et des docks; tâchez de subir sans maugréer la fumée des usines, des locomotives, des grues, des cargo-boats; de respirer avec courage les odeurs de pétrole, d'écouter avec patience les bruits de ferraille, les appels de sirènes, le halètement des machines.

Interestingly, this rather ugly side of the harbour has not been focused on by the Rouen painters. Even though some paintings do show the 'dark' side of the port, the artists do not insist on it. Joseph Delattre for instance, in his *Rouen, les quais*, does not present the piles of coal on the riverside as an eyesore but plays them down in a green tone. They certainly do not appear unsightly in his painting. It is possible that the quays were not as polluted when the artists represented them, but they must already have been very busy. We therefore need to ask why the painters may not have been interested in representing the harbour as a dirty, dreary place.

Perhaps the answer can be found in the local newspaper, the *Journal de Rouen*. It faithfully reported regularly on the commercial traffic of the port as well as on the various improvements made to the harbour site. For instance, on 6 July 1888, the paper stated:

Nous constatons avec plaisir que le mouvement de la navigation maritime dans le port de Rouen continue à être des plus satisfaisants. Il a atteint, comme tonnage, un chiffre exceptionnel pendant le mois de juin dernier. Il est entré 185 navires qui ont apporté sur nos quais 124,217 tonnes de marchandises (...). En juin 1887,il n'y avait eu que147 navires avec 98,454 tonnes.[110]

A few days later, an article entitled *Le Port* rejoices about the new improvements being carried out: "chaque jour qui s'écoule amène un progrès dans les installations complémentaires du port, sur la rive gauche. (...) Encore quelques mois de patience et l'amélioration de notre bassin maritime aura fait un grand pas."[111]

Like the opinion expressed by their daily paper, the Rouen painters seem to have seen the positive side of the harbour's development. This expansion was hoped to contribute to the growth of the city, hence the general positive attitude concerning the harbour. In 1888 the Conseil Municipal hoped that the works carried out in the port and in the city "amèneront un développement de prospérité dont les recettes profiteront"[112], whilst the local paper expected the construction of a slipway to allow the city to keep "un travail de réparation qui occupera de nombreux ouvriers"[113]. This is confirmed by a historian in *Histoire de Rouen*, who describes the numerous activities directly connected to the harbour traffic: "Autour du trafic maritime – et fluvial – (...) toute une activité se ranime, des dockers aux courtiers ou aux armateurs. Mieux, de nouvelles branches industrielles naissent ou se développent, liées au port ou fondées sur l'importation de divers pondéreux: (...) métallurgie, (...), raffineries de pétrole (...), l'amorce d'une industrie papetière (...), et plusieurs distilleries."[114]

In such an atmosphere of economic growth and in the midst of all these industrial developments linked to the harbour, it is unsurprising that the local artists turned their attention to the port of Rouen and its exciting new activities. I now want to look at such works, having chosen in the context of this thesis the paintings which include the cathedral of Rouen as well as harbour scenes. How do the medieval and the modern combine in this case?

The harbour paintings

A number of pictures representing the port of Rouen also show the cathedral. The medieval building is the background of images of trade and modernity, so what does it stand for in such surroundings?

A significant artist in this context is Albert Lebourg (1855-1928), for he chose the harbour at Rouen as a motif several times. Born in the Norman countryside, he moved to Rouen as a young man in order to attend art classes. But he found working in a studio rather 'triste' and "va chercher [ses motifs] sur les rives de la Seine ou les quais de Rouen"[115]. He did not however stay in Rouen very long, living in Algiers for four years and moving to Paris afterwards. But he returned for spells in Normandy between 1886 and 1895. According to Georges Dubosc, "Rouen (...) resta la patrie de son rêve et de son art" and the painter owes his talent to the city: "son atmosphère, son climat le convièrent à y pénétrer les lois de l'ambiance, et affermirent sa perception et sa technique"[116]. Indeed, many pictures of Rouen and its surroundings attest his attachment to his native Norman soil, and several depict the cathedral. His interest for the subject may have come from the fact that Léon Monet "dut mettre au courant A. Lebourg de l'entreprise de son frère, Claude Monet, quant à la "série" des cathédrales de Rouen"[117]. This is confirmed on 13 November 1893 when Lebourg told his friend Félix Roux that "on dit des merveilles des cathédrales de Rouen, de Monet; elles ne sont pas encore finies. Monet trouve Rouen d'une couleur superbe."[118] With such an example at hand, it is not surprising that Lebourg felt inspired to follow the master. Lebourg's interest in cathedrals in general appears to even be rooted in his childhood, at a time when he used to spend part of his

holidays in Noyon. As an old man, the painter wrote with emotion about this particular time, and about his memories of Noyon cathedral, whose bells are still ringing in his head:

> Et cependant, parmi tous ces souvenirs, qui sont pourtant ceux de ma vie d'homme mûr et de vieillard, vues, vieilles tours, cathédrale de Noyon et ses paysages de Picardie, avec ses tranquilles moulins dont les ailes tournaient doucement au souffle du doux vent de France, c'est encore vous que je me rappelle le plus, c'est encore de vos chères images que je conserve le souvenir attendri, de même que dans mes oreilles chante encore le carillon de vos cloches, ô cathédrale de Noyon![119]

Also, Lebourg's general interest for cathedrals is rather obvious if one takes a look at his entire work, for he used not only Rouen cathedral but Notre-Dame de Paris too as a subject several times, for instance in several views of the monument under the snow, described as "des vues de Notre-Dame de Paris enneigée remarquables faisant usage d'une palette violacée du plus bel effet"[120] (these will be analysed in Chapter Six). Another particularity of Albert Lebourg's work is the obvious link between the man and his native province. "C'est la province natale à laquelle le rattachent toutes les fibres de son existence"[121] says Henri Usselmann in 1983, whilst Dubosc had stated that Lebourg's Norman roots were present in the whole of his work: "tout l'art d'Albert Lebourg tire donc son origine de son pays natal, de son sol et de ses eaux. (...) Son art probe et robuste, clair et franc, répudiant les excès, est purement normand."[122]

The four pictures I want to study here all show the towers and spire of Rouen cathedral rising above the business of the harbour on the Seine. Lebourg's *Rouen, la Cathédrale depuis la rive gauche* is the busiest of the four: there is a double row of barges and boats anchored along the quay, as far as the eye can see (Fig. 96). In the background the entangled masts, chimneys and cranes create a busy effect. There is

however not a lot of movement on this part of the quay: a man can be seen standing on his barge on the left whilst a woman and a little boy stroll along the river; the whole scene is very calm. This image is therefore certainly not about the hard work of the dockers or the machines. In fact, this side of the quay is very much in keeping with the other, where tall houses border the water under the pale silhouette of the cathedral. This picture may well be about unity: even though the foreground is filled with modern machines, these are not making a statement of modernity, on the contrary they seem at one with the other, quieter side of the river. This impression is helped by the colours used by Lebourg: whilst he does use brighter tones for the barges and boats, these are not however violent colours at all, and are in keeping with the very soft tones used for painting the Seine and the right bank. Everything appears to be pulled together and be part of the same idea of pictorial unity. This can also be seen through the cathedral rising towards the sky like the masts and chimneys do. Therefore there could even be a message of timelessness here: just as the cathedral was built with the most modern techniques of its time, allowing it to rise, the modern boats rise too in a hymn to progress. This theme of unity is I believe recurrent in all four Lebourg's paintings studied here. In *Remorqueurs à Rouen*, the cathedral and the tugboat seem once again to be intrinsic parts of the same landscape (Fig. 97). The water reflects the sky, and the tugboat's fumes are losing themselves into the clouds, making the two (machine and sky) come together in front of the cathedral. In this picture the monument also appears to be a symbol of unity between two worlds: it is planted on the ground, therefore acknowledging its earthly origin, but also painted the colour of the sky, hence emphasising its links with the heavens.

The strong unity between past and present can also be seen in Lebourg's two other works discussed here. *Le Port de Rouen et la Cathédrale* presents a view of the cathedral and port not dissimilar from the first painting, but from further along the left bank (Fig. 98). It is a grey scene, where the waters of the Seine and the sky share the same muted tone. It is also again a scene where modernity is absent, even though one can guess the importance of Rouen harbour from the number of boats discernable on the quay. The only boats really visible in details are a large tall ship anchored along the quay and several small rowing boats on the river. These are not modern vessels and carry a message of tranquillity, like in the first painting. These particular boats do not make any noise and there are no cranes or noisy tugboats to be seen. The cathedral on the right bank is emphasised through its position in the middle of the canvas, and its spire responds to the tall ship's masts. The old world, symbolised by the cathedral, seems to join here the more modern world of the port. The two co-exist in a harmony of soft greys, showing how the old and the new can live together.

Finally, Lebourg also made a pen-and-ink drawing on the same subject in 1878, entitled *Le Port de Rouen* (Fig. 99): Empty boats in the foreground seem to be resting, anchored next to an empty quay. This is a tranquil scene devoid of figures on which Rouen cathedral acts once again as a background. The slim spire echoes the vertical lines of masts, uniting the port and the cathedral.

Overall it appears that Lebourg may be rejecting the harshness of modernity for paintings which are harmonious and present a connection between the old and the new. The tones he uses are very soft and unite the various elements of the pictures

rather than separate them. Rouen cathedral therefore tends to appear in Lebourg's work as an essential part of the life of the city.

The sense of tranquillity and unity depicted by Lebourg can also be found in Joseph Delattre's depictions of the harbour and the cathedral. Another native of the city and a defender of the plein-air method, Delattre (1858-1912) painted many scenes which included the Seine. His talent for representing the weather conditions and the Seine was commented on by Georges Dubosc in 1910: Delattre is a "notateur affiné et sûr des valeurs atmosphériques du paysage" and his "sensibilité vibrante et profonde" allows him to "exprimer les aspects les plus mobiles, les plus changeants, les plus éphémères des ciels et des eaux avec une justesse si expressive."[123]

The same critic also wrote in 1914 how Delattre represented the Seine:

> Delattre en [la Seine et ses bords] a rendu toute l'intimité, toute la grâce discrète et modérée, comme les collines qui l'entourent, avec un charme de poésie et d'émotion inégalables. Nul mieux que Delattre n'a compris la beauté tranquille du fleuve français. Nul, parmi les plus renommés, n'a su exprimer, avec une émotion plus sincère, la grâce fluide de ses eaux, leur lente coulée sous de grands ciels limpides qui s'y reflètent, ou parmi les brumes légères estompant le décor de ses rives.[124]

Tranquillity and unity are particularly obvious in his *Rouen, les quais*, in which several elements harmonise into an impression of deep serenity and union between the old and the new (Fig. 100). In this immobile scene, where the only two figures appear to be walking in the foreground but are rather indistinct, in the shade, and therefore not emphasised at all, the painter has focused on the one hand on the vertical lines of the cathedral, the crane and a tall ship's masts and on the other on the soft sunny light inundating them. Whilst the foreground and its piles of merchandise (grain or possibly coal) are left in the shade, the half-hidden ship, the cathedral and the crane, attract the viewer's gaze thanks to their verticality and to the soft tones used. The light of the sun is reflected in particular on a folded sail, on the

tower of the cathedral and on the buildings bordering the quay. This light falling on these various elements, combined with the fact that the Seine is hardly visible, contribute to the feeling of unity, as well as the fact that all three main elements have been carefully staged together in the centre of the composition. They appear to be very close to one another, therefore emphasising the idea already present in Lebourg that the city of Rouen, the cathedral and the port, live together in harmony. In this very picture, the weather itself is agreeing with this combination of elements: the soft light blue sky occupies more space on the canvas than the ground, giving the scene an immediate impression of calm. This harmony is also visible on two other views that Delattre made of the harbour, albeit from further afar: *Le Port Maritime de Rouen* and *Le Port de Rouen* (Figs. 101 and 102). Interestingly, both place the cathedral again near the middle of the picture, and associate its spire with masts and chimneys. Both represent boats 'at work' in the port, as smoke can be seen, but paradoxically they are again paintings from which a strong feeling of tranquillity emanates. This is thanks to the large blue skies and the featureless foregrounds. In such landscapes, the cathedral appears to be a companion to the modern vessels: they all look as if they belong to the same place under the same quiet sky. The use of blues is particularly effective in *Le Port Maritime de Rouen*, where the large expanse of water, as well as the sky and the cathedral, are all painted blue, therefore associating all these elements in one single impression. Harmony between past and present, handling and subject, made such images a 'modern' ideal of Rouen, just as images of the medieval streets constructed a 'timeless' image of the city. Both these representations were common, and so marketable, particularly amongst the *bourgeois* of the city, and especially those who made their fortune in marine trade.

However, in contrast with these tranquil scenes of harmony, other artists focused on the business and the modernity of the port. Two such paintings are Charles Frechon's *Rouen depuis la rive gauche* and Lemaître's *Le Port de Rouen* (Figs. 103 and 104).

Frechon (1856-1929), born in a village at the limit between Picardy and Normandy, studied at Rouen's Académie de Peinture et de Dessin in 1879 and 1880 and was particularly attracted by plein-air painting. He devoted himself entirely to his native Normandy and adopted city of Rouen. The critic Jean Laurier mentioned in *Rouen-Gazette* in 1912 Frechon's "amour profond pour cette terre normande qu'il a si bien traduite"[125]. The artist may have been inspired by his elder Pissarro for this *Rouen depuis la rive gauche* (1900-01), for the point of view of the cathedral is not dissimilar to Pissarro's *Les Toits du Vieux Rouen* (1896, Fig. 118). We know that the two artists met in Rouen in 1895 or 1896 on a café terrace. Delattre, who was also present, recalled that on that particular occasion "le père Pissarro est venu à passer et nous avons passé une petite heure à causer avec lui. Naturellement, c'est la peinture qui a été le principal sujet de conversation (...)."[126] One may then probably assume that Frechon would have followed Pissarro's work with interest. In Frechon's *Rouen depuis la rive gauche*, a depiction of the river, harbour, quay and cathedral, the composition is centered on a small boat from which white smoke emanates. This image of labour is accompanied on the left by another smoking boat, as well as by a crane on the right and by a number of silhouettes on the quay. Moreover, activity is also implied in the depiction of a row of shops or businesses along the river. The water itself also appears to be in movement, as it is represented rippled by small

waves, and the sky, painted in an almost divisionist technique with a multitude of small touches, echoes the movement of the water. We are therefore faced here by an active landscape, dominated by the large presence of Rouen cathedral. Because it is directly behind the houses, and seems to emerge from their roofs, of which it has nearly the same colour, the cathedral is made to be an intrinsic part of the city and hence of its everyday activity. The fact that it is in the centre of the painting, directly over the smoke from a boat, further emphasises this point. Moreover, as it overlooks the city, it can be seen not only as part of it, but also as its guardian, and one which is linked to the heavens it reaches for.

One could however argue that this may not be the only possible reading of this work: the cathedral is indeed a central element of the composition, but it seems somehow detached from the activity going on near the quayside. Whilst the water, the boats and the shopfronts are depicted in bright colours, reds, yellows and green in particular, the cathedral is light purple and seems to be melting in the background provided by a similarly coloured sky. It is therefore possible to interpret this view as being that of two separate worlds: the present, modern world is in the foreground, and the past, the old-fashioned, receding into the background. So we could have here a view of the cathedral in the city which is completely in opposition with the previous three Delattre paintings. Rather than seeing a unity between the monument and the harbour, Frechon's depiction insists on its possible fading away.

Such a reading can very much be associated with Lemaître's *Le Port de Rouen*, especially because here the activity of the harbour is even more contrasted with the tranquillity of the cathedral and the town in the background. The boats occupy about half the painting and the numerous masts as well as the grey smoke and the figures

on the quay make this depiction of the harbour a very busy one. In the background, the cathedral raises its spire over the houses on the quay, and even though some boats and smoke can be seen there too, they are in lighter colours and further away, so the overall impression for the background is one of tranquillity. This painting presents us with an obvious separation between the old and the new. But whilst Frechon's depiction seemed to relegate the cathedral into the shadows of the past and praise the modern, here we have the contrary. The modern port is not an attractive place, it is dark and smoke covers the sky. On the other side of the Seine, the old town looks lighter and airy under clearer skies. It is symbolised by the recognisable shape of the cathedral, whose spire responds to the masts. Lemaître's message here appears rather negative: modernity is dark and gloomy, and his contemporaries have left behind the beauty and tranquillity of the old. And because the harbour and its greyness are so prominent here, there seems to be little hope that the old times will ever come back. They are condemned to fade away in the background.

I have thus demonstrated that the very same cathedral, depicted in the very same context of the harbour, could have several meanings according to how each particular painter chose to represent it. The common point to all these works is however the fact that whatever the artist's position regarding modernity, the cathedral always represented the past in a strongly recognisable symbol. I now want to investigate another side of modernity: after the machines, I am going to explore the relation between the people of Rouen and their cathedral.

The Cathedral and the Rouennais

This section is devoted to Lemaître's *Rouen, le pont de pierre* (two different versions) and his *Vue de Rouen* (Figs. 105, 106 and 107). These three very similar scenes of *Rouennais* in their modern city will help us understand what kind of relationship they may have with their cathedral.

Lemaître painted these three views from exactly the same angle: the end of the Pont Corneille on the left bank of the Seine, looking towards the city centre. They are all very fine depictions of the everyday life of the small people of Rouen: all kinds of trades are represented from the two men in white aprons on *Rouen, le pont de pierre*, chatting by the lamp-post, to the two little boys standing in the same place in the other painting of the same title. The feature which interests us here is the fact that all these people are in the dominant presence of the cathedral. Its silhouette fills the background sky of all three views. Its presence is very obvious; apart from the spire of Saint-Maclou which also appears in *Vue de Rouen*, the cathedral is the only identifiable building, epitomising the entire city. I want to argue that the presence of the monument can be read here in two contrasting ways: it may be seen as uniting the people with the heavens, but can also represent the fading of Christianity and past values. This shows how flexible an image such as this may be, malleable it may become depending on the viewer.

Unity between cathedral and people can be felt through several elements in these paintings. First, we have here a prominent building whose silhouette rises from just behind the bridge and the various figures. There is nothing in-between the *Rouennais* and their cathedral, and this can be an argument in favour of their unity. Moreover,

the choice of colours made by the painter emphasises this point: in *Vue de Rouen* for instance, the yellow/beige of the paving is echoed in the background by the same tone in the cathedral and a paler beige in the sky. This unity in the colours can well indicate a unity between the people, their cathedral and the heavens. The medieval monument then can be seen as the intermediary between God and the *Rouennais*.

But this idea may not prove to be correct if we look at the paintings in more detail. Instead of uniting the people with the heavens, the colours chosen may in fact indicate a distance between the cathedral and the foreground figures. This is particularly obvious in the second *Rouen, le Pont de pierre*, where the bright colours of the foreground are no match for the greyness of the cathedral. The impression that the cathedral belongs to another time is conveyed through its muted colour, the eye is attracted to the foreground, where the action is happening in full colours. Moreover, the people depicted do not seem to have anything to do with the cathedral, they are absorbed by what they are doing and none of them are looking at it. The cathedral seems therefore completely detached from their everyday life. So Lemaître presents here modern times as detached from the old, as well as being more appealing than it, more colourful, more active, generally more interesting. The old, the religious, are relegated to a minor role in the background. What matters is now and what the *Rouennais* are making of the present, one might say.

Cathedral, country and humanity

The next group of paintings represent Rouen cathedral in a much more rural context. These give the monument a completely different dimension, as it is not any more a part of the big city, whether medieval or modern, but part of a much wider perspective.

Frechon's *Rouen depuis la rive gauche* (c.1900) is an idyllic scene of peasants at work making haystacks in a sunny field by the Seine (Fig. 108). This painting is very much an example of what Frechon is famous for, as Georges Dubosc explains: "nul mieux que Charles Frechon ne connaît la campagne normande, et ne l'a traduite avec plus de sincérité et de puissance (...). Frechon est aussi le peintre de toutes les saisons normandes. (...) Il a chanté aussi l'été ardent avec ses blés dorés et ses moissonneurs (...)."[127] The background of *Rouen depuis la rive gauche* is occupied by the river on which a few boats can be seen, and by the cathedral's silhouette, a prominent presence near the middle of the horizon. In the foreground, just as Dubosc's quotation described, a group of harvesters is reaping a field and making stacks. But what strikes the viewer here is the strength of the colours used for this scene: The field being reaped is bright green and yellow, with dots of red and blue on the haystacks (most of the painting is executed with the pointillist method[128]); the Seine, the boats, the cathedral and the sky are blue with yellow dots. This creates a very luminous, bright atmosphere, implying happiness and prosperity for the figures involved. Because the cathedral is associated with the peasants thanks to the blue dots used both for the representation of the monument and that of the haystacks and figures in the field, I feel that Rouen cathedral is supposed to be part of this rural

scene. It is not only the cathedral of the equally blue city beyond the river, nor that of the harbour (present in the form of the boat silhouettes), it is also that of the rural world around it, it belongs to everyone, is part of everyone's life.

Moreover, both the cathedral and the peasants seem to anchor the city of Rouen and the modernity of the harbour in their ancestral roots. Going even further, one may say that the obvious praise of country life present in this painting, combined with the silhouette of the cathedral, may be an attempt at discrediting the modern life epitomised by the boats and cranes of the background. The importance given to the idealised peasants in white shirts working in glorious sunshine, compared to the smallness of the boats in the background, emphasises the felicity of old-fashioned life in the fields. I believe however that this view may be rather exaggerated, as the harbour is not depicted negatively: the painter used a slightly darker blue than for the river and the cathedral, but this tone is still rather soft and in keeping with the rest of the picture. Moreover there is no particular emphasis on smoke, which is hardly visible. Hence the idea that the modernity present in this painting is not seen in a negative way but rather as an intrinsic part of life in Rouen.

So, by combining the peasants, the field, the harbour and the cathedral in a single image, Frechon manages to prove that the old and the new, rurality and urbanity, can co-exist happily.

Lemaître's *Le Peintre en plein air* is different because the figure involved is not a peasant but an artist (Fig. 109). It is actually possibly the son of the painter, who as a young man was tempted by an artistic career[129]. But even though this scene does not show the life of peasants, it still represents the countryside as an ideal place to be:

sunny and tranquil. The painter is by himself, under a parasol, in the process of painting the town of Rouen at his feet, from which the cathedral rises towards the sky. I believe the impression given is that of a possible osmosis between the scenery and the cityscape. The colours used are different, but they do not clash; moreover the blue used in the city can be found again in the trees on the left hand-side, on the painter's canvas and in the flowers at his feet, indicating a connection between countryside and town. The cathedral here identifies Rouen, but also acts as an echo of the vertical lines of the parasol, easel and small trees on the right, making the association between city and country even stronger. And of course the painter is looking towards the city, his canvas being the material link connecting his position in nature with the city and its cathedral in the background.

We therefore have in these two paintings the idea that cathedral, city and country are linked with one another very tightly, this association being reinforced by the representation of various figures. So what happens when these figures are not present? Is the countryside around Rouen cathedral still related to the monument and the city?

I want to suggest that, in the three following paintings, Frechon and Pinchon succeed in linking the quiet surroundings of the Norman countryside to the cathedral and the town behind, even though the contrast between the business of the city and the tranquillity of the countryside is still visible in their representations.
In Frechon's *Rouen depuis le Mont-aux-Malades*, this contrast between town and countryside is made rather evident: the foreground is occupied by a blooming apple

tree[130] in front of a lush green meadow, whilst the background shows the extent of the big city, its roofs, its spires and its cathedral (Fig. 110). However, I do not believe this distinction to have a negative connotation. On the contrary, the two elements (town and country) look intrinsically connected. The branches of the tree mix with the background landscape; the cathedral and the flowery twigs reach for the same sunny sky, above the city. The colour used to depict the city is a soft blue/grey with touches of white and pink, emphasising its positive aspect. We seem to have here a cathedral and an entire city linked to their rural surroundings rather strongly. As far as the cathedral itself is concerned, this can of course remind the viewer of pre-modern times, when rurality was much more important. The juxtaposition of the cathedral with a tree can also recall the analogies often made concerning the 'forests' of pillars being compared to the ancestral medieval forests. The fact that the tree is an apple tree, which is typically Norman, brings a definite regionalist element into the painting, adding an aspect particular to the Rouen area. To sum up, I believe there is here a reminder of the origin of the cathedral: even though it is in town, its links with the Norman countryside are shown.

Frechon gives us a different view of the cathedral in *Rouen et l'île Lacroix vus du Cours-la-Reine*, where the monument is presented from the bank of the Seine and is strongly linked again to its surroundings (Fig. 111). Here only two aspects of the city are visible: the cathedral and some factories on the side of the river. However, whilst these could have been contrasted with the tranquillity of the Seine, they are in fact presented with the same idea of unity again. This theme is implemented principally through the use of colour: this is a very blue painting, where the water, trees, buildings, cathedral, hills in the background and sky share a very similar tone. The

unity is reinforced by the shadow of the cathedral and that of the factory chimneys being reflected in the water, making the city and the natural element come together. We have therefore here a cathedral once again completely blending with the surrounding countryside. It seems that the painter wants to show how well rooted it is in the Norman earth, how much it belongs to it.

Another example of this idea can be seen in Pinchon's *Rouen depuis Bonsecours*[131], in which the Rouen-born painter represented 'his' cathedral almost as a continuation of the lush neighbouring countryside (Fig. 112). Pinchon (1866-1943) was a very good friend of Dumont, whose "groupe des XXX" he joined. At the top of his career, he was a "fauviste tendre"[132] with an "étonnante vocation de coloriste"; "le peintre de la lumière normande"[133], a tendency very visible in the bright colours used in the painting we are studying here. Pinchon was admired by his contemporaries; the collector François Depeaux bought one of his first works[134], and the *Rouen-Gazette* critic Pierre Dutreuil, reporting on the artist's 1911 exhibition, saw in him a "très bon dessinateur" and a "coloriste remarquable". He praised the painter's "hardiesse" when it came to colour: "Pinchon chante, he wrote, dans le "fortissimo" de la palette; il chante bien, parbleu!"[135] Pinchon's knowledge of colour use has been commented on too by Georges Dubosc in his 1914 publication on *L'École de Rouen*: "Robert Pinchon aime la couleur pour la couleur et sait la faire chanter en des gammes heureusement harmonisées."[136] In this composition, *Rouen depuis Bonsecours*, the colourist's skills are obvious with the city of Rouen surrounded by the vibrant colours of autumnal woods on a hill. Once again the town is not shown negatively compared to the countryside, but rather blends into its natural environment. The soft purple used to paint the town and the cathedral can be

found again in the leaves of the trees, and the smoke rising from a chimney blends into the pink sky, indicating a strong connection between nature and modernity. The cathedral's position is interesting: it rises from the side of the wood, almost as if it was part of it, and the verticality of its spire and towers echo that of the tree on the left-hand side. So we have here another 'natural' cathedral, whose roots are recalled through the use of a landscape. It does belong to the city, whose purple colour it shares, but also to the natural world, from which it seems to have risen.

We have therefore seen that whether Rouen cathedral is represented with or without figures, it remains united with the Norman countryside and hence with its regional and ancestral roots. Even though it was built in a city which had evolved to become modern, with a national role, the monument, and indeed the city itself, look as if they will never lose their medieval and *normand* character.

Rouen Cathedral: a subject for experimentation

Suzanne Duchamp

Born in the small town of Blainville-Crevon, 15 kilometres from Rouen, Suzanne Duchamp's work was completely eclipsed by her three brothers' fame. *Rouen la Cathédrale* (1905) is one of her first works, as she started painting in 1905, then went on to exhibiting at the Salon des Indépendants and at the Salon d'Automne[137] (Fig. 113). She was part of the Section d'Or exhibition in 1912 and took part from 1919 to 1924 with her artist husband, Jean Crotti, and her brother Marcel in the Dada movement[138]. This early work representing Rouen cathedral is worth close attention,

as it is completely different in its technique from the ones we have previously seen in this chapter.

This very modern painting is composed of two distinct areas: the bottom half, painted in several tones of green, probably represents the top of trees, whilst the top of the canvas lets us see the cathedral's spire and towers, as well as the red roofs of several houses, on a grey cloudy sky. The artist has used colour very boldly, with large brushstrokes, and no details can be seen. The vivid greens of the trees give the work a particularly strong foreground, whilst the grey background is more muted. In between, the junction is made by the bright red roofs which seem to pull the two areas of the painting together, drawing the cathedral's colder tones inwards. The effect is that of a cathedral emerging from the trees as if it was part of the forest itself. This connexion is further reinforced by the obvious use of very thick paint all over the painting, emphasising the fact that everything has the same importance and is in a way on the same plane. Indeed, the perspective is only imaginary, as there are no clear outlines of the trees, and the house tops emerge from invisible streets. The cathedral itself only gets some sort of perspective in the roof of the tower, painted in two colours so as to distinguish its two faces. So even though Duchamp uses here a very modern approach to her cathedral, she still wants to make it part of a greater plan. Other artists chose to link the cathedral to the city, to the harbour, or to its people; here Duchamp takes another approach by associating the monument to the incredible greenery of foliage, as well as to the houses and to the sky. They all seem to belong together, in a composition placing the cathedral at its centre. But despite its position in the composition, the cathedral is not the dominating element here. It is hardly visible, hidden behind the vivid foliage, it is only a decorative shape. The

image of the cathedral is therefore undermined, as other elements take precedence. Another important feature of this painting is the complete absence of time markers; there are no reminders of modernity, nor any elements which could place this cathedral view in the *pittoresque* category. However, due to the modernity of the technique used, this is avoided and creates an image which transcends time. The cathedral, devoid of any sign of modern life, still seems to belong to the past, but the painting itself, thanks to its modern technique, anchors it strongly in the present, and, knowing Duchamp's attraction for artistic experimentation, even draws it into the future.

Pierre Dumont

We have seen in the first section of this chapter representations of the cathedral by Dumont which were much more conventional than his *Cathédrale de Rouen* of 1912. This particular version is "cubiste-orphique", to recall the terms used by Guillaume Apollinaire, the poet and critic, to describe it (Fig. 114). This painting, explains François Lespinasse, was exhibited by the Société Normande de peinture moderne in a show entitled "le Sublime Moderne" in Rouen in 1912. It was then sold to a chain of stores in Milwaukee, and was part of a travelling exhibition of "Cubist and Futurist paintings imported directly from Paris", which travelled to Milwaukee, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, New York and Philadelphia.[139]

As with Duchamp's futuristic view, we have here an experimentation of a new technique, that of geometric structuration. For the cubists "le monde s'adresse à l'intellect qui le regarde comme une composition architecturée, équilibrée, où tout

peut se réduire à des schémas aisément reconnaissables et nommables, formes, rythmes, volumes, etc."[140]

This is obviously present in Dumont's cathedral of 1912, where the monument becomes an assemblage of geometrical shapes, colours, rhythms. This is a technique based on Robert Delaunay's *Eiffel Tower* pictures. The idea of such de-composition is possible because of the notoriety of the motifs chosen. Dumont uses his local cathedral for such an experiment because it is so well-known and has been represented in more traditional manners so many times that he feels he can do something different with it and still have viewers recognising it. Indeed the spire is easily recognisable thanks to its openwork design, but otherwise the painting shows the cathedral as a multi-faceted object. Decomposed by the artist, the monument becomes a collection of elements, all connected to each other. This connection is mainly done through the colours used: black, browns and several tones of oranges prevail, giving the painting its unity.

Destructured as it is here, the cathedral nevertheless remains one entity. The cubist wants the viewer to consider it differently, and maybe understand that it is a collection of a multitude of elements rather than one solid building. Here each stone, each sculpted detail, each window has its importance: they do not represent anything on their own but put together succeed in forming a great monument.

The artist has also chosen to represent his cathedral in a way which would touch not only the intellect, but also the soul: he placed in the foreground the statue of what may be a Christ, extending his hand in a blessing gesture. Even though it is geometric, like the rest of the painting, this easily-recognisable figure places the cathedral strongly on the side of emotion. Dumont, even though using an intellectual

technique, which could have made this work particularly severe, strict and unattractive, managed to make his cathedral a friendly figure thanks to the use of this particular statue. It could also be argued, of course, that by putting the figure of Christ in such a prominent position, Dumont is also giving a Christian message. But perhaps it has a possible general message of peace, rather than an obvious Christian one. This figure is not clearly identifiable, does not have a halo or any conventional religious sign. It is not attached to the cathedral but looks as if it is rather part of the city, as a house can be seen to its left and two others to its right. The statue may be giving a blessing, or a sign of peace, and is addressing anyone looking at it, not just the Christians. Its message seems universal rather than particular.

Thanks to its cubist technique, this painting manages to connect together the cathedral, its city, the sky and a figure of peace. The artist has observed the scene and deconstructed it in order to reconstruct it bearing a new message, and therefore forcing viewers to look at it in a different way.

Conclusion: Rouen Cathedral, a religious building?

This chapter would not be complete without a study of the possible links between religion and the various cathedral representations we have seen.

Because a cathedral is a religious building, one has to wonder whether the various painters we have studied here intended to present their cathedral as a religious monument. I have already mentioned the possible Christian connection present in Vignet's *Rouen, La Cathédrale* and in Lemaître's views of the bridges. These interpretations could go either way, towards the disappearance of the Church

on the one hand, or towards the importance of its presence on the other. This may well reflect the situation of the Church in Normandy at the time, and this situation could explain why most artists played down the religiosity of their cathedral, preferring to see in it a symbol of the old yet modern great city.

For instance, I do not think that Dumont's cathedrals' façades have anything religious about them. The cross above the central rose is present in all three paintings, so there was no deliberate attempt to hide it. However, I do not think that it was the artist's aim to show his cathedral as a place of worship. He was more interested in the changing tones of the stones and in the overall impression the cathedral had on him and on the city. There is no obvious invitation to enter the church, as the impression is to be had from outside, where the city belongs. This is a cathedral in the life of the city, belonging to the city as a whole, not one for the inner life of individuals.

It does not appear that Lebourg intended to present his cathedral as a Christian symbol either. It is possible to think that by presenting modern life along with the old cathedral, but by putting the church in the background, he insisted on the modernity of the city rather than on its past and the religiosity attached to it. His cathedral appears as a symbol of the city rather than one of Christianity.

Historians teach us that there was however a strong Catholic current in Normandy at the beginning of the 20th century. The Rouen diocese was considered a "bon diocèse", and the Normans in general took an active part in the various 'patronages' and 'cercles d'études', as well as the 'Sillon' and the 'Action française'[141], which sprung to life everywhere in France. Also, people remained

attached to Catholic rites and religious festivals, baptism was still the norm for the vast majority of children, and private education was largely developed in Normandy[142].

Moreover, the rich bourgeoisie of Rouen, a group considered as part of a 'conservatisme libéral', had become "très catholique, ou plutôt très cléricale" between the 1870s and the years preceding World War One. They were not however strong monarchists and only demanded order, some freedom and security for their possessions. On the whole, the *Rouennais* in general appear very tame, "ni réactionnaire, ni révolutionnaire"[143].

So in such a climate, why do we not have obvious religious representations of the cathedral, which could have easily been sold to the local bourgeois? The answer is probably in the fact that the paintings do show the cathedral anyway, and that the bourgeois were free to see it as they wished to, whether it be an interesting medieval monument in their city, or the siege of the diocese. We have seen how images of the cathedral were flexible, and could be interpreted from various points of view. Moreover, the very same buyers may have preferred views of the city that would remind them and their visitors of their wealth. A coal merchant would certainly have liked a view of the harbour showing its activity, whilst the admirers of the old town could have purchased views of the old streets. Therefore the artists did not have to paint a specific subject in order to sell their work. Rouen was so diversified that there may have been no need for specific Catholic views of the cathedral.

One may also argue that the artists would almost certainly have been of political opinions different from that of the bourgeois. One must not forget that even though

most of them learnt art in academic surroundings, many felt bold enough to engage with new painting techniques and went the way of discreet modernism. So if the artists were in general more liberal in their ways, more open to novelty than the bourgeois, or maybe in favour of the Séparation, then they would not have wanted to show their great cathedral as a place for an old-fashioned religious practice. They liked their cathedral a lot, they saw its beauty and its connection to their city, but this love seems to have been rather down-to-earth than religious.

I have shown how one monument, Rouen cathedral, could take on a varied number of aspects according to the writer commenting on it or the artist representing it. The guidebooks analysed at the beginning of this chapter took specific points of view (Christian or lay in particular) if the reader noticed. This multivalence is present in paintings too. For Monet, the cathedral was not a religious or political symbol, but a means to experiment even further with his ideas on the representation of the experience felt in a particular place at a particular time. With Monet, Rouen cathedral was not used for the religious or nationalist qualities sometimes attributed to cathedrals, but because it was an ideal place to experiment with, after the haystacks of the country or the modernity of the Gare Saint Lazare. An ancient man-made monument, it captured light, as well as the impressions of the artist, in such a way that every single moment of the day proved to be different on canvas. The 'envelope' surrounding Rouen cathedral transformed the monument into an almost organic shape embodying the vision of the painter.

But the Rouen painters also had very personal views of their cathedral, even though they were different from Monet's. These views all tend to concur towards the same idea. The artists considered their cathedral an intrinsic, essential part of the city, whether they represented the old medieval quarters or the new harbour area. To them, the cathedral belonged to the city and seemed to connect with all aspects of its life, from the busy port to the *Rouennais* walking in its shadow. The cathedral also belonged to Normandy more generally, as the more 'panoramic' paintings of the city showed. The Rouen painters therefore place us in the presence of a monument producing a big impact on its surroundings, and, interestingly, this impact is mostly of a non-religious nature. In nearly all the paintings studied in this chapter, Rouen cathedral acts as a connector, linking the old and the modern, the past and the present, the city and the countryside in a positive manner. In the more modern approaches, the cathedral was even seen as linked to the future. Indeed, only very few of these paintings may be interpreted negatively: it is perhaps the case for Dumont's dark representation and for Lemaître's views of the bridge, but even then the cathedral can still be seen as a guarding presence over its people. In its various constructions, for the Rouen painters between 1880 and 1914, the cathedral was a continuous positive presence on their world, and one so deeply rooted in their soil, so strongly connected to the life of the city, that it probably seems immortal.

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[1] Quoted in PATIN, S., 1994, p. 37.
[2] *Guide de France-Rouen, Elbeuf et les environs*, 1887-1888, p. 28.
[3] *Guides Joanne-Rouen*, 1887., p. 18.
[4] Ibid., p.16.
[5] Ibid., p.19.
[6] LOTH, J. (M. l'abbé), 1879, p. VII.
[7] Ibid., p.1.
[8] Ibid., p.522.
[9] Ibid., p. 551.

[10] BARRÉ, E.-E, 1896, p.1.
[11] Another, more sketchy description could already be found in Flaubert's *Smarh*, written in April 1839. (BOPP, L., 1951, p.377).
[12] FLAUBERT, G., c.1921, p.267-8.
[13] Ibid., p.268.
[14] BOPP, L., Neuchatel, 1951, p.378.
[15] FLAUBERT, G., c.1921, p.269.
[16] Ibid., p.269.
[17] MAUPASSANT, G. de, 1959, p. 201.
[18] HAYES TUCKER, P., 1995, p.153.
[19] An idea put forward by SWEENEY, J.J. in *Plastic redirections in twentieth-Century Painting*, Chicago, 1934, p.6. Cited in HEARD HAMILTON, G., 1960, p.6.
[20] PISSARRO, J., 1990, p.24.
[21] HEARD HAMILTON, G., 1960, p.17.
[22] Letter to Gustave Geffroy, 28 March 1893, in WILDENSTEIN, D., 1979, p.272.
[23] Letter to Alice Monet, 4 April 1893, in WILDENSTEIN, D., 1979. p.273.
[24] Letter to Gustave Geffroy, 7 October 1890, in WILDENSTEIN, D., 1979, p.258.
[25] Letter to Gustave Geffroy, 7 October 1890, in WILSENSTEIN, D., 1979, p.258.
[26] SPATE, V., 1992, p.224.
[27] HEARD HAMILTON, G., 1960, p.19.
[28] SPATE, V., 1992, p.231.
[29] Ibid., p.231.
[30] MICHEL, quoted in SPATE, V., 1992, p.231.
[31] HEARD HAMILTON, G., 1960, p.27.
[32] Ibid., p.28.
[33] PISSARRO, J., 1990, pp.24-25.
[34] Ibid., p.25.
[35] Quoted in PISSARRO, J., 1990, p.25.
[36] PISSARRO, J., 1990, p.25.
[37] Ibid., p.26.
[38] Conversation between Willem Geertrud Byvanck, Dutch essayist, and Monet, in "Un Hollandais à Paris en 1891", published in 1892 and reproduced in STUCKEY, C., 1985, p. 165.
[39] PISSARRO, J., 1990, p.26.
[40] Ibid., p.27.
[41] THOMSON, R., 2003, p. 155.
[42] MIRBEAU, O., "Claude Monet", *Claude Monet. Auguste Rodin*, galeries Georges Petit, Paris, June-August 1889, p. 14, quoted in THOMSON, R., 2003, p. 155.
[43] BOUYER, R., *Le Paysage dans l'art*, Paris, 1894, p. 18, quoted in THOMSON, R., 2003, p. 155.
[44] THOMSON, R., 2003, p. 160.
[45] Ibid., p. 162.
[46] HAYES TUCKER, P., 1995, p.153.
[47] Quoted by GERMANN, G., 1972, p.7, without a bibliographical source.
[48] COURAJOD, L., *Les Origines de l'Art Moderne*, Paris, 1894, p.34; quoted in HAYES TUCKER, P., 1995, p.153.
[49] HAYES TUCKER, P., 1989, p.197.
[50] Ibid., p.174.
[51] SPATE, V., 1992 p.226.
[52] HAYES TUCKER, P., 1995, p.155.
[53] HEARD HAMILTON, G., 1960, p.25.
[54] HAYES TUCKER, P., 1989, p.153.
[55] Ibid., p.154.
[56] HAYES TUCKER, P., 1995 p.158.
[57] PISSARRO, J., 1990, p.30.
[58] Ibid., p.30.
[59] CLEMENCEAU, G., "Révolution de Cathédrales", in *La* Justice, 20 mai 1895, quoted in *Rouen, Les Cathédrales de Monet*, 1994, p.99.
[60] SPATE, V., 1992, p.226.

[61] Ibid., p.231.
[62] HAYES TUCKER, P., 1995, p.154.
[63] Ibid., p.155.
[64] Ibid., p.157.
[65] HAYES TUCKER, P., 1989 p.157.
[66] Letter to Alice Monet, 5 April 1893, in WILDENSTEIN, D., 1979, p.273.
[67] HAYES TUCKER, P., 1989, p.160.
[68] Ibid., p. 188.
[69] Ibid., p. 188.
[70] PISSARRO, J., 1990, p.39.
[71] CLEMENCEAU, G., "Révolution de Cathédrales", in *La* Justice, 20 mai 1895, quoted in *Rouen, Les Cathédrales de Monet*, 1994 , p.101.
[72] SPATE, V., 1992, p.225.
[73] Ibid., p.225.
[74] HAYES TUCKER, P., 1989, p. 188.
[75] Ibid., p. 188.
[76] PISSARRO, J., 1990, p.31.
[77] SPATE, V., 1992, p.229.
[78] Many of the paintings studied in this section are kept in the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen. Only a few are accessible to the public, the rest have been studied in the reserves.
[79] Georges Dubosc, born in Rouen in 1854, wrote more than 50 books and 6,000 articles on the artistic, literary and historical aspects of his native city, most of which were published in the *Journal de Rouen*. He was himself an artist, trained at the École des Beaux-Arts de Rouen, then in Paris but chose a carreer in journalism. He defended Impressionism with passion, as well as his artist friends, amongst which are Delattre, Frechon and Lemaître. (LESPINASSE, F., 2003, p.15.)
[80] DUBOSC, G., 1914, pp. 5-6.
[81] C. La Broue, cited in LESPINASSE, F., 1995, p.251.
[82] LESPINASSE, F., 1995, p.251.
[83] G. Dubosc, cited in LESPINASSE, F., 1995, p.251.
[84] From the exhibition catalogue of the 'XXX', Galerie Legrip, Rouen, 29 October-12 November 1906, cited in LESPINASSE, F., 1995, p.254.
[85] DE KNYFF, G., 1976, p. 11.
[86] Ibid., p. 11.
[87] Ibid., p. 12.
[88] DE KNYFF, G., notes that Dumont started painting Rouen cathedral in 1908. (1976, p. 12).
[89] DE KNYFF, G., 1976, p. 12.
[90] Gilbert de Knyff, *Pierre Dumont (1884-1936)*, Édition Mayer, Paris, 1976, p. 12.
[91] DE KNYFF, G., 1976, p. 11.
[92] *Rouen Pittoresque*, 1886, p. 21 (chapter entitled: "Le Port de Rouen en 1884).
[93] *Rouen Pittoresque*, 1886, p. 25.
[94] Ibid., p. 31.
[95] LESPINASSE, F., 2003, p.31.
[96] *Histoire de Rouen. Univers de la France et des pays francophones.*, 1979, p. 309.
[97] Cited in *Histoire de Rouen. Univers de la France et des pays francophones.*, 1979, p. 309.
[98] *Histoire de Rouen. Univers de la France et des pays francophones.* 1979, p. 318-319.
[99] LESPINASSE, F., 1995, p. 143.
[100] LAURIER, J., "Exposition Marcel Delaunay", in *Rouen-Gazette*, Samedi 9 décembre 1911.
[101] LESPINASSE, F. 1995, p. 58.
[102] BÉNÉZIT, E., 1999, Tome 8, p. 485.
[103] *Rouen Pittoresque*, quarante dessins par Maxime Lalanne, E. Augé, Libraire-Éditeur, Rouen, 1886, chapter entitled "De la rue Verte au bateau d'Elbeuf".
[104] From "Les Messieurs du Salon", cited in LESPINASSE, F., 1995, p.99.
[105] LAURIER, J., "Exposition Henri Vignet", in *Rouen-Gazette*, samedi 21 octobre 1911. The same Jean Laurier, reporting on the "Exposition des artistes rouennais" in the *Rouen-Gazette* (samedi 30 mars 1912), expressed the same critic about Vignet's old-fashioned work again, even though he did recognise its latent poetry: the artist is "d'un métier si lointain, d'un art si désuet, qu'il faut une lente application pour aller trouver en ses oeuvres, la nuance poétique y rôdant doucement (...)."

[106] DUPOUY, A., 1920, p.24.
[107] UHRY, A., 1919 pp. 99-104.
[108] DUPOUY, A., 1920, p.26.
[109] Ibid., p.21.
[110] "Le Mouvement du port de Rouen", *Journal de Rouen et des départements de la Seine-Inférieure et de l'Eure*, vendredi 6 juillet 1888.
[111] "Le Port", *Journal de Rouen et des départements de la Seine-Inférieure et de l'Eure,* mardi 10 juillet 1888.
[112] "Rapport du Conseil Municipal de Rouen – Le budget", *Journal de Rouen et des départements de la Seine-Inférieure et de l'Eure*, 22 décembre 1888.
[113] "Les Travaux du Port – Le Slip", *Journal de Rouen et des départements de la Seine-Inférieure et de l'Eure*, lundi 10 décembre 1888.
[114] *Histoire de Rouen*, 1979, p. 341-2.
[115] LESPINASSE, F., 1995, p.41.
[116] DUBOSC, G., 1914, p. 9.
[117] LESPINASSE, F., 1983, p.101.
[118] Ibid., p.103.
[119] Memories of Albert Lebourg, quoted in LESPINASSE, F., 1983, p.11.
[120] LESPINASSE, F., 1995, p.52.
[121] Introduction by Henri Usselmann, in LESPINASSE, F., 1983, p.3.
[122] DUBOSC, G., 1914, p. 10.
[123] DUBOSC, G., "Joseph Delattre-Son oeuvre", *Rouen-Gazette*, samedi 3 septembre 1910.
[124] DUBOSC, G., 1914, p. 12.
[125] LAURIER, J., "Exposition des artistes rouennais", *Rouen-Gazette*, samedi 23 mars 1912.
[126] Letter from Joseph Delattre to Charles Angrand, from the beginning of 1896, quoted in *Charles Frechon 1856-1929*, 1998, p.30.
[127] DUBOSC, G.,1914, p. 13.
[128] On Frechon's technique, Georges Dubosc notes that the painter "s'est peu à peu créé une manière très personnelle, en empruntant à la technique impressionniste quelques procédés de division du ton et en sachant les allier à une tenue et à une autorité qui s'imposent." DUBOSC, G., 1914, p. 13.
[129] In *L'École de Rouen de l'Impressionnisme à Marcel Duchamp 1878-1914*, 1996.
[130] Georges Dubosc noted that Frechon "est surtout le peintre des pommiers en fleurs, des vergers au printemps, des floraisons roses et blanches." DUBOSC, G., 1914, p. 13. We therefore have here a very typical Frechon scene.
[131] This painting is difficult to date, as Pinchon started being interested in the fauvisme in 1913, but earlier paintings were already described as extremely colourful. This is the case for a still life exhibited in 1909 and described as "une nature morte de M. Pinchon accapare outrancièrement la lumière (...)." (Article by HANS,. P. in *Le Travailleur Normand*, quoted in LESPINASSE, F., 1995, p. 269.)
[132] WOLF, P.-R., preface of the catalogue of the April 1958 exhibition of R. Pinchon and M. Louvrier at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen, cited by LESPINASSE, F., 1995, p. 279.
[133] LESPINASSE, F., 1995, p. 279.
[134] MOREL, E., "Robert Pinchon – L'Oeuvre", *Rouen-Gazette*, samedi 10 septembre 1910. The article also mentions the fact that Pinchon exhibited at the Galerie Legrip for the first time at the age of 16, and that the viewers were astonished to see "une telle sensibilité de vision alliée à un sentiment aussi profond de la couleur."
[135] DUTREUIL, P., "Exposition Robert Pinchon", *Rouen-Gazette*, samedi 1er avril 1911.
[136] DUBOSC, G., 1914, p.15.
[137] LESPINASSE, F., 2003, p.36.
[138] BÉNÉZIT, E., Tome 4, 1999, p. 791.
[139] LESPINASSE, F., 2003, p.39.
[140] CABANNE, P., 1982, p.6.
[141] The "Sillon" was a Catholic organisation promoting the idea of a democracy based on the morals and spirituality of Christianity. The "Action Française" is a nationalist political movement created in 1899, which quickly veered towards monarchism.
[142] *La Normandie de 1900 à nos jours*, 1978, pp.124-135.
[143] SIEGFRIED, A., Paris, 1913, p. 258-260.

Chapter Five
The anarchist cathedral

Je crois fermement que nos idées imprégnées
de philosophie anarchique se déteignent sur nos oeuvres (...).
Camille Pissarro, April 1881[1].

This chapter aims to explore the links between anarchism and the representation of cathedrals, for the painters Camille Pissarro and Maximilien Luce were both militant anarchists and both represented cathedrals in their works. Anarchist ideas made their way through France in the latter part of the 19th century, through figures such as Michel Bakounine (1814-1876) and Piotr Kropotkin (1842-1921). Bakounine was considered a collectivist communist, whilst his successors focused particularly on anti-authoritarianism. Indeed, anarchism was described in 1880 by Carlo Cafiero, an Italian anarchist who participated in a number of French anarchist gatherings, as "l'attaque, (...) la guerre à toute autorité, à tout pouvoir, à tout Etat. Dans la société future, l'anarchie sera la défense, l'empêchement apporté au rétablissement de toute autorité, de tout pouvoir, de tout Etat"[2], so that the people could live in equality and freedom. These ideas were also expressed by the anarchists tried in Lyon in 1883 for "avoir (...) été affiliés ou fait acte d'affiliation à une société internationale, ayant pour but de provoquer à la suspension du travail, à l'abolition du droit de propriété, de la famille, de la patrie, de la religion, et d'avoir ainsi commis un attentat contre la paix publique". In a common declaration they read out, the accused underlined the principle of equality: "Nous voulons la liberté, et nous croyons son existence incompatible avec l'existence d'un pouvoir quelconque, quelles que soient son origine et sa forme, qu'il soit élu ou imposé, monarchique ou républicain, qu'il

s'inspire du droit divin ou du droit populaire, de la Sainte-Ampoule ou du suffrage universel". They also, like Cafiero, stressed the importance of a world where everybody would be equal: "Nous voulons, en un mot, l'égalité; l'égalité de fait, comme corollaire ou plutôt comme condition primordiale de la liberté."[3]

Anarchists relied both upon propaganda and revolutionary activities to spread these ideals; artists who shared these ideals participated in the propaganda. If the anarchists' terrorist acts (in 1886 at Montceau-les-Mines, the bomb thrown into the Chamber by Vaillant in 1893, attacks in Paris in February and April 1894, the assassination in June 1894 of president Carnot in Lyon by an Italian anarchist) have remained in the collective memory, it appears that in fact the anarchists' actions took overall a less violent turn: "Des chants enflammés retentissaient dans les cabarets ou les rues. Des pamphlets révolutionnaires passaient de main en main", wrote Pissarro's biographers in 1981, describing the atmosphere of the time.[4] A number of writers and artists, amongst which Paul Signac (1863-1935), Charles Angrand (1854-1926), Pissarro (1830-1903) and Luce (1858-1941) followed the anarchist movement, and this chapter will analyse how Pissarro and Luce used cathedrals as a motif in the context of their political engagement.

Before assessing Pissarro's and Luce's representations of cathedrals, it is essential to understand the link between anarchism and art. There would seem to be a paradox in representations of cathedrals by anarchists: how can an intrinsically Catholic building become a symbol for an extreme-left political movement advocating the abolition of religion? We will see in particular that, in anarchist

ideology, the cathedral stood not as a religious symbol but as an element strongly associated with the people.

This analysis will then allow us to turn our attention to other painters who represented cathedrals in the context of the people who lived and worked directly in its direct surroundings. This opens a new dimension to our study, as the cathedral studied in this chapter appears thus no longer as an impressive symbol of patriotism or religiosity, but as a building which is part of everyday life, as a monument linked to those who built it.

Anarchism and art; anarchism and the cathedral

If a number of artists followed the anarchist movement, it is because their own concerns met the issues addressed by the anarchist theorists. The case of *avant-garde* painters is significant: artists such as Signac, Luce or Pissarro worked in a style rejected by the Salon and therefore felt they belonged to those rejected by the establishment; they were victims of the social order, and saw little possibility of earning an acceptable income from their art. So their feelings towards society were similar to those felt by the anarchists (or anarchist-communists as they are often referred to):

> Hence their hopes as artists as well as political individuals were centred on the construction of a new order in which art would meet with the justice that now eluded it. Their dreams of social justice converged with those of the Anarchist-Communists, the group of radicals which beyond all others emphasized human liberty as the goal of social reform.[5]

But the connection between art and anarchism does not stop with the empathy felt by a number of artists. Anarchism believed in the power of art, not only for spreading its ideas, but also in its role to educate the masses and "prepare them for

the richer existence promised by an anarchist future"[6]. The idea of propaganda through art was expressed by Kropotkin, a Russian prince who had settled in France at the end of the 1870s, and who was the most important anarchist ideologue of the 1880s and 1890s. In *Paroles d'un révolté* (1882) he called upon all artists to help with the anarchist revolution:

> You poets, painters, sculptors, musicians, if you have understood your true mission and the interest of art itself, come then, put your pen, brush, burin in the service of the revolution. The arts have a mission to accomplish for the achievement of the future society (...). Depict for us in your vivid style or in your fervent paintings the titanic struggle of the people against their oppressors; inflame young hearts with the beautiful breath of revolution which inspired our anarchism (...). Show the people the ugliness of contemporary life and make us touch with the finger the cause of this ugliness.[7]

The role played by art in communicating with the masses was underlined in 1896 by Fernand Pelloutier in a conference he gave on "L'art et la révolte" at the *Club de l'Art Social*, which regularly convened under the direction of Adolphe Tabarant to allow artists and writers to discuss the revolutionary possibilities of art. Pissarro, Auguste Rodin and Jean Grave (an anarchist publisher with whom many of the anarchist artists worked) were members. Pelloutier supported Kropotkin's ideas on the role artists should play, but also added that artists should share in:

> the sufferings and sentiments of the community by an equal desire for revolt against inequality and by aspiring towards a society where each person would be independent and find the satisfaction of his own needs in the satisfaction of the needs of his fellows. We do not separate art from socialism, and oppose those who refuse to write for the masses, considering them to be incapable of intellectual perception. We want to add communism of artistic pleasure to the communism of bread.[8]

Many artists followed these ideas, and one may find a large number of anarchist-inspired works in the paintings and drawings made by Luce, Camille and Lucien (his eldest son) Pissarro, Signac, or Henri-Edmond Cross. They represented the harshness of the lives of the working class on the one hand[9], and on the other scenes which presented the ideal world resulting from the anarchist revolution[10]. Their agrarian subjects, representing an idyllic country life, may also be seen as anarchist in

essence, for they glorified the healthy life of the peasant, as opposed to harsh industrial work forced upon the worker by economic forces the anarchists wished to destroy. A large number of Camille Pissarro's works represent peasant men and women in the country, at work or enjoying their leisure time, usually in the basking sun of a beautiful field or garden.

So we have determined that anarchism and art were strongly linked on several levels – propaganda, identification with the oppressed workers, education of the masses, representation of a better world – but what about the role of the cathedral when it is represented by anarchist artists such as Pissarro, Luce and Signac? How does it link up with these artists's political ideas?

The answer may be found in Kropotkin's work. In 1887, the theoretician defined anarchism as a socialist system without a government. This implied social harmony, and Gothic cathedrals appear in Kropotkin's work as linked to this social harmony, an idea we will find in Luce's painting. In 1902, Kropotkin wrote in *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* that:

> (...) when a number of craftsmen -- masons, carpenters, stone-cutters, etc. -- came together for building, say, a cathedral, they all belonged to a city which had its political organization, and each of them belonged moreover to his own craft; but they were united besides by their common enterprise, which they knew better than any one else, and they joined into a body united by closer, although temporary, bonds (...).[11]

Kropotkin has thus a vision of the building of the cathedral as a common goal uniting various people from different trades, and therefore Luce's cathedrals, if they are to be read as anarchist, could represent the anarchist ideals of individuality and co-operation. The cathedral would therefore appear as the embodiment of these

ideals, an idea we will come back to later in this chapter. However a paradox appears, as anarchism was opposed to all authoritarian institutions, whether it was the state, the Church, private property or the family. In fact, when Kropotkin wrote in 1896 about his admiration for the medieval *commune*, he also insisted on the "minorités dominatrices" which prevented society from becoming harmonious:

> (...) quand nous analysons l'histoire des institutions populaires – le clan, la commune, le village, l'union de métier, la "guilde", et même la commune urbaine du moyen-âge à ses premiers débuts, nous retrouvons la même tendance populaire à constituer la société dans cette idée [the idea of "une société (...) qui cherche l'harmonie dans l'équilibre"] – tendance qui fut toujours entravée d'ailleurs par les minorités dominatrices.[12]

The "minorités dominatrices" can be read as referring to the Church as well as the upper classes or the State, and appear to Kropotkin as an obvious obstacle to the creation of an ideal harmonious society. His position against the Church may be read in an even more obvious fashion when he referred in 1896 to the way in which both the Church and the State established their power: "ce fut par le massacre, la roue, le gibet, le glaive et le feu que l'Eglise et l'Etat établirent leur domination (...)"[13]. So, if the Church as an institution is to the anarchists a vehicle for the "dominating minority", but the cathedral an image of the common goal of the people, can these two notions be put together in a painting? Pissarro's paintings of Rouen, as well as Luce's pictures of Notre-Dame de Paris, will help us determine what makes an intrinsically religious building an anarchist symbol.

Pissarro painted Rouen Cathedral several times and another church in Dieppe (*La Foire autour de l'église Saint-Jacques, Dieppe*, 1901). His churches are bathed in milling crowds and everyday life. What does Rouen cathedral stand for in such settings? Why did an anarchist choose to represent a cathedral, a quintessentially

religious building, several times? Pissarro said in 1881: "Je crois fermement que nos idées imprégnées de philosophie anarchique se déteignent sur nos oeuvres (...)"[14]. So how exactly do his paintings of cathedrals reflect his political engagement? It will be of interest here to develop the anarchist idea that cathedrals are "communist" buildings, for they were built by individuals for the good of the community. How is this idea present in Pissarro's cathedrals? Also, how can this idea be present even in the cathedral paintings that show the building without the life of the city and the crowds surrounding it? One of the views of the Rue de l'Epicerie in Rouen for instance shows an almost empty street. Does the meaning of the cathedral change in such settings? Is it still anarchist?

Luce, another anarchist artist, painted Notre-Dame de Paris several times around 1900. He set his cathedral in very busy street settings. These canvases of the metropolitan cathedral, painted shortly after Monet's of Rouen, need to be analysed, assessing their ideological meanings in the context of Luce's political engagement.

More generally, the study of the two painters will help us determine how a cathedral can be read in an anarchist manner; but can it lose its intrinsic religiosity? How can a Christian building's meaning change so radically that it may lose its very essence? Or does the anarchist artist create a new essence, a new meaning for the cathedral? Also, given the great role lent to artists in the propagation of anarchist ideals, does this mean that painters like Pissarro and Luce had to forget about their artistic pretentions to dedicate themselves to their political engagement? Or did they manage to combine both their political ideals and artistic ideas? Also, one should

bear in mind that Pissarro and Luce were painters, working first and foremost on their art, and that their pictures may not necessarily have been made to be overtly anarchist. The readings proposed below are thus interpretations made in the light of the two artists' known political ideas. A viewer unaware of their anarchist views was probably rather unlikely to have drawn an anarchist message from these cathedral pictures. They are not obviously anarchist and thus could appeal to a wider audience, an audience needed by the painters who needed to make a living out of their art.

Camille Pissarro

The anarchist painter

Pissarro was one of the most significant artistic figures within the anarchist movement. He went to Rouen for two long campaigns in 1896 and 1898, where he painted the cathedral several times, either in busy or quiet settings. But what were exactly his political ideas, and how did he express them during his life? "Je crois fermement que nos idées imprégnées de philosophie anarchique se déteignent sur nos oeuvres et dès lors [celles-ci sont] antipathiques aux idées courantes"[15], said Pissarro to his son Lucien in April 1881. This declaration does not only prove that Pissarro did consider himself an anarchist, it also underlines the fact that anarchism is indeed visible in the works of anarchist artists.

But why was Pissarro attracted by anarchism in the first place? According to Shikes and Harper, Pissarro's biographers, "de nombreux artistes soucieux de leur indépendance, étaient-ils sensibles au refus de l'autorité et à l'exaltation de l'individu prônés par l'anarchisme. Les théories insistaient sur le fait que cette doctrine

permettait à l'artiste d'exprimer librement sa propre conception du beau."[16] Anarchism and art therefore shared some common ground, particularly as far as the notion of independence was concerned. It appears that the painter followed carefully the political struggle of his times. In 1883, in a letter to his son Lucien, he expressed his admiration for the anarchist Louise Michel: "cette femme est extraordinaire. Elle tue le ridicule à force de sentiment et d'humanité."[17] When in 1891 ten demonstrators were killed by the army in Fourmies, he expressed his indignation: 'Tu as dû lire dans les journaux les épouvantables massacres de Fourmies dans le Nord!"[18] he wrote to Lucien, thus showing both his support for the oppressed people and his hatred of the present government. Pissarro read *Le Père Peinard*, an anarchist paper written in slang founded in 1889, which supported direct action, like theft, if people were hungry. But the artist's philosophy was closer to that of Grave, the publisher of another, more intellectual anarchist paper, *La Révolte*. This paper wanted to spread its ideas through education. Other very well known artists and writers subscribed to this paper too: Luce, Signac, Anatole France, Huysmans, Octave Mirbeau, Alphonse Daudet, Stéphane Mallarmé, Charles Lecomte de Lisle. In 1896, Pissarro provided Grave with free lithographs as the publisher wanted to put together an album of political drawings[19]. Another proof of Pissarro's anarchist convictions can be seen in his financial generosity towards Grave: he sent him money several times, when he was himself very much in need[20]. The artist also helped financially another anarchist publication: in 1896 he sent 50 francs to help Emile Pouget publish *La Sociale* while the latter was in prison[21].

Pissarro read Piotr Kropotkin's works, and mentioned them to his friend Mirbeau in a letter:

Je viens de lire le livre de Kropotkine. Il faut avouer que, si c'est utopique, dans tous les cas c'est un beau rêve. Et comme nous avons eu souvent l'exemple d'utopies devenues des réalités, rien ne nous empêche de croire que ce sera possible un jour, à moins que l'homme ne sombre et ne retourne à la barbarie complète.[22]

So once again we have here a solid proof of the beliefs of the artist, along with the explicit expression of his hopes for a better, anarchist society. His agreement with Kropotkin's ideas was such that it also appears that the painter advised his sons and friends to read his books too.[23]

Shikes and Harper summarise Pissarro's political ideas in this way: "On découvre chez cet homme une haine farouche de l'injustice et de la société dans laquelle il vit, une sympathie profonde pour ceux qui en sont victimes et une aspiration, vague et typiquement anarchiste, vers un monde qui naîtrait peut-être du chaos destructeur qui l'environnait."[24]

Pissarro also showed that the reality of the life of the workers in a capitalist economy was difficult and unforgiving. In *Les Turpitudes sociales*[25], a series of twenty-eight private overtly anarchist drawings made in 1889 for two cousins in England, the artist depicted the terrible conditions which some people had to endure in the capital[26]. "Pissarro dépeint l'angoisse des pauvres, des sans-logis et des affamés", note Shikes and Harper[27]. This series is however introduced by a note of hope: on the title page an old philosopher watches Paris where the sun is rising with the word 'ANARCHIE' around its rays (Fig. 115). It represents the dawn of a new era. This series about the turpitudes against the poor is evidently showing the decadence of society under the rules of capitalism, and the hopes the artist places in anarchism. But do the cathedral paintings articulate the same ideology?

Pissarro also expressed his ideas in a different manner in quasi-utopian representations of the countryside, even though these are only discreetly anarchist as they were public images, as opposed to the overtly anarchist private drawings of *Les Turpitudes Sociales*. From the later 1880s, his numerous representations of farm or country workers were noticeably idealized, showing the idyllic life they led away from the city. In the country, the people appear happy under the shining sun. They work together, provide for their community and always seem to be contented with their fate. A striking example of this is *The Gleaners*, painted in 1887-9 (Fig. 116). A strong sense of community appears: the women wear the same kind of clothes and head scarves, their features are not clearly seen and therefore they all look very much alike. Work and life in the country are celebrated: the women look strong and healthy, and the harvest abundant. In such paintings Pissarro proffered "an ideal of a classless community which accorded with his anarchist ideology"[28].

All the examples mentioned so far show Pissarro's opinions on the powerful, destructive effect of capitalism, opposed to the happiness that can be found in leading a simple life in harmony with nature and one's peers. Pissarro's views on religion are also essential. In his series of drawings *Les Turpitudes Sociales*, the artist showed mainly the dreadful consequences on the people of a capitalist economy. But the sixth drawing of the series, *Enterrement du cardinal qui avait fait voeu de pauvreté*, gives an insight into Pissarro's opinion of religion, as it depicts an imposing procession following the richly decorated hearse carrying a cardinal, whilst the crowds are watching (Fig. 117). Pissarro's view on religion could not be clearer:

he sees it as hypocritical to impose one's views on people whilst not doing as one preaches. In a letter to his son Lucien (1891), he referred to religion as a superstition and saw it as a threat posed by the bourgeois against the liberation of the people: "La bourgeoisie inquiète surprise par l'immense clameur des masses déshéritées, de l'immense revendication du peuple sent le besoin de ramener les peuples aux croyances superstitieuses de là ce remue-ménage de symbolistes religieux, socialisme religieux, art idéiste, occultisme, Bouddhisme etc etc."[29] In another letter written in 1896, Pissarro expressed his fears of the possible renaissance of Catholicism: "Ce que tu me disais dernièrement (...) sur l'avenir du néo-catholicisme m'a trotté tout le temps dans la tête. Tu as raison de croire que si cela réussissait nous serions, ou plutôt vous autres les jeunes, seriez très menacés!"[30] Then, a few days later, he said, to Lucien again, that "[le mouvement réactionnaire] est, du reste, c'est ma conviction, absolument en désaccord avec la vraie marche des idées de notre philosophie moderne."[31] Pissarro believed the Catholic Church's teachings were superstitious and therefore rejected them fiercely[32]. So why would an artist with such a negative vision of a threatening, dangerous religion decide to make Rouen cathedral the subject of several paintings in 1896-1898?

The Rouen cathedral paintings

The study of several of the paintings made during Pissarro's campaign in Rouen will show that his choice of motif may not be as paradoxical as it seems. The cathedral is indeed a main feature of several paintings, but it is not the sole important element; other features have to be taken into account to fully understand how these

canvases might be interpreted. I want to suggest that even though the cathedral may most obviously be seen as a symbol of the power of the Church, to which anarchists were strongly opposed, in Pissarro's works it can be interpreted as standing as a proof of the unity of the people; as an anarchist ideal.

It has been shown that Pissarro despised capitalism and that he was opposed to the Catholic Church and its hierarchical way of functioning; that he considered the Church as a bastion for the reactionaries. The artist also thought that art was anarchism under certain conditions: "Tous les arts sont anarchistes! Quand c'est beau et bien! Voila ce que j'en pense."[33], implying that if a work of art can be admired for these two qualities, then it can be considered anarchist. This could be seen as a direct attack against Salon painters, whose academic style may not have been considered "beau et bien" by artists trying to break away from the tradition! It is interesting to note that Signac shared the same ideas, when he wrote in *La Révolte* in 1891 that he wanted to ban from art "tout plaidoyer social direct, toute propagande, voyant dans l'innovation technique et esthétique un défi bien plus révolutionnaire."[34] Here the attack against academic style is much more obvious, relegating the Salon painters to the ranks of conservatives. On the same note, Lucien Pissarro wrote, in a letter which, according to Shikes and Harper, probably reflects his father's views, that: "La distinction que vous établissez entre l'art pour l'art et l'art à tendance sociale n'existe pas. Toute production qui est réellement une oeuvre d'art est sociale (que l'auteur le veuille ou non), parce que celui qui l'a produite fait partager à ses semblables les émotions les plus vives et les plus nettes qu'il a ressenties devant les spectacles de la nature."[35] Here we have the idea that if a work of art is good, then it is "social", for it

allows everyone to feel the same as the artist did in a communion between the painter and the people.

In the light of these ideas, this section is going to look at the paintings Pissarro made of Rouen cathedral in order to find out whether they fit with the idea that all good, non-Salon art is in essence anarchist and therefore bears an anarchist message. What did Pissarro see in Rouen cathedral that matched his political aspirations? The analysis will focus not only on the busy street scenes near the cathedrals, but also on the quietness of other representations of the medieval district. What can the cathedral stand for in both settings? Through the analysis of the paintings themselves, as well as a study of Pissarro's correspondence, this section suggests how a cathedral might become an effective if clandestine anarchist image, as only fellow anarchists would have been able to recognise this symbol.

Pissarro went to Rouen for three campaigns, two in 1896 (20 January-end of March and 6 September-12 November) and one in 1898 (23 July-ca. 15 October). He stayed both times at hotels with views of the port, and it is interesting to see that he concentrated first and foremost on the life and activity of the banks of the Seine, before turning his attention to the cathedral. Two main reasons lay behind Pissarro's decision to paint in Rouen. First he had seen Monet's series on the cathedral, which had been exhibited at Durand-Ruel's in 1895, and it seems that he was "immediately struck by a 'unity' in the works, of a kind for which he himself had been searching for some time."[36] He said that the exhibition of Monet's work was 'la great attraction'[37] (sic) and expressed his admiration for the concept of a series: "c'est

surtout dans son ensemble qu'il faut que ce soit vu"[38]. Pissarro had already tried his hand at series painting (in Rouen in 1883 and in Paris in 1892-3), but these were rather fragmentary, the formats unsystematic, and the pictures not always finished. So it seems that, following Monet's successful series, Rouen would provide Pissarro with a motif for a series. Another reason for coming to Rouen was the fact that Pissarro had already experimented with the same motif before. In 1883, he had done in Rouen what he would refer to in 1896 as 'la série de Rouen de 1883'[39]. Therefore, his stays in 1896 and 1898 can be seen as a development of a theme he had already tried before.

During the two 1896 campaigns, Pissarro produced twenty-eight paintings of the city. Two years later, after completing his first two substantial Paris series, he made another nineteen canvases in Rouen. The vast majority of these forty-seven paintings dealt with the life of the bridges and docks along the Seine. Most of these scenes show the intense activity of the quays, with their crowds of people either at work or passing-by on a bridge, steam cranes sending smoke into the sky, boats being loaded or unloaded, merchandise stacked on the quays, and the chimneys of factories. In 1896, only two canvases showed the cathedral (*Les toits du vieux Rouen, temps gris (la cathédrale)* and *les toits du vieux Rouen par soleil*); in 1898 several more followed, all showing the cathedral from street level, particularly from the Rue de l'Epicerie.

The first analysis will concentrate on *Les toits du vieux Rouen, temps gris (la cathédrale)*, for it is the very first painting representing the cathedral done during the Rouen campaigns (Fig. 118). It is strikingly different from the views of the activity of the quays. Here the huge bulk of the cathedral rises behind a sea of rooftops,

against a grey sky. There is no sign of modern life. In fact, the only sign of activity is the light smoke rising above some of the roofs on the left hand-side. "Figure-toi tout le vieux Rouen vu par-dessus les toits, avec la cathédrale, l'église Saint-Ouen, et des fantaisies de toitures, de tourelles, vraiment étonnantes, vois-tu une toile de trente remplie de toitures grises, vermoulues, vieilles, c'est extraordinaire!"[40] Pissarro's own comments on his painting shows how amazing he thought this view was. And indeed it is, especially if compared with the modern life of the quays: here the cathedral and houses seem to be suspended in a timeless environment. The old medieval houses give the cathedral a perfect frame which probably make it appear the way it would have in the middle ages. Because there is no trace of modernity, the viewer is taken back hundreds of years into the medieval city. The overall grey tone adds to this impression by bringing all the elements (roofs, turrets, chimneys, cathedral and sky) together. So we have here what seems to be a rather paradoxical painting if compared to the rest of the Rouen series. Here Pissarro did not concentrate on modernity and activity, but on medieval times and tranquillity. Also, as mentioned before, the anarchist artist decided to paint a religious building. The question is to know why he did so.

First, one should acknowledge Pissarro's admiration for the beauty of the cathedral. His appreciation for the Gothic may be found in a letter to Lucien sent from Rouen on 20 October 1896: "Si je devais subir une influence, j'aimerai mieux subir celle des vrais gothiques français que j'ai à chaque instant sous les yeux ici, c'est épatant comme ils sont nature, tout en étant très décoratifs, sans la mièvrerie et la sentimentalité de ceux des modernes qui se disent leurs élèves (...)"[41]. So one of the responses the artist felt for the cathedral was an aesthetic and cultural one, as well

as being an anarchist view too. This anarchist viewpoint may at first seem incongruous for viewers unfamiliar with anarchist ideas, as common knowledge links cathedrals to religion rather than anarchist politics. But Pissarro's representation of Rouen cathedral does not appear to go against his political views; indeed, there is a strong possibility that he saw in the cathedral the achievement of the people, and in the houses below their living quarters. This idea is strongly supported by the fact that Pissarro was a reader of Piotr Kropotkin's works; he had even designed the cover of a lecture given by the exiled Russian prince in London and published by Grave in 1894[42]. Kropotkin's work gives us an idea as to what Rouen cathedral may stand for in the eyes of an artist. In *La Conquête du Pain*[43], a book that Pissarro had read[44], Kropotkin developed the argument that the great cities and their buildings were constructed by a people who worked together for the common good: "Search into their [the cities] history and you will see how the civilization of the town, its industry, its special characteristics, have slowly grown and ripened through the co-operation of generations of its inhabitants (...)"[45]. Therefore, a cathedral would represent a time when people used to work together for a common goal. Richard Thomson sums up the anarchist ideas on cathedrals when he states that:

> Pissarro espérait que "enfin, la nature, la bonne nature des gothiques français, prend[rait] le dessus". Pour lui, le gothique avait cette "sensation vitale" que tout art digne de ce nom se doit de posséder. Il se référa régulièrement, et en l'approuvant, à "la tradition gothique française", non pas dans un sens chauviniste mais comme un art honnête et naturel. Le gothique etait un type de construction que les anarchistes étaient en mesure d'approuver. Lorsque Pissarro se projeta sur la couverture des *Turpitudes Sociales* comme le philosophe ironique, et lorsque Signac fit de son *Démolisseur*[46] un autoportrait clandestin, les deux artistes condamnaient les bâtiments représentant l'état capitaliste, lui-même un édifice dangereux et corrompu qu'il fallait détruire. Il serait remplacé par leur vision d'un futur anarchiste. Cette vision pouvait aussi prendre forme dans des représentations de bâtiments. Paradoxalement -mais l'anarchisme est rempli de paradoxes- la métaphore ne se trouva pas dans le présent. Les images de la cité moderne presentées par Luce et Pissarro ont tendance à simplement représenter la ville, ou à la lénifier, plutôt que de l'imaginer. Le passé mediéval, avec ses grandes églises gothiques -Notre-Dame ou le Mont-Saint-Michel- monuments à la fois superbes et durables au travail de la communauté, servirent admirablement de métaphore anarchiste à l'harmonie sociale.[47]

So Pissarro's cathedral has the following meanings: it is a representation of the work of the good Gothic builders who worked together for a common good, it shows a building which is the fruit of honesty and nature (unlike those representing capitalism), and it shows too that these qualities are long-lasting.

Also supporting my theory on the anarchist cathedral are some elements to be found in the painting. The overall grey and muted tones unite the cathedral and the houses. So the cathedral here would not be a symbol of the Catholic Church but the achievement of the people who built it, whose descendents still live in the old grey houses. The cathedral seems indeed rooted in the city rather than going into the sky (which is also grey). The whole picture is very horizontal (apart from the spire, but it is cut and therefore does not finish its stretch to the sky), implying a focus on earthly matters rather than religious ones.

Finally, it is important to consider Pissarro's own thoughts on this painting to fully understand how important it was in his eyes. In a letter to his son Lucien written on 24 March 1896, shortly after its completion, the artist insisted on the strong presence of the cathedral in the canvas: "Mon vieux Rouen, avec sa cathédrale au fond est fait par temps gris et assez ferme sur le ciel, j'en étais assez satisfait, cela me plaisait de la voir se profiler grise et ferme sur un ciel uniforme de temps humide"[48] The adjective 'ferme'shows that the cathedral is very much seen as a strong element in the painting, most probably implying that it carries a meaning. This meaning was never stated by Pissarro, but the importance he gave to this particular painting shows that he must have put personal feelings and/or ideas into it. In letters to his family the

painter referred several times to the fact that he did not want to sell it cheaply (he wanted 5,000 francs for it), refused an offer from François Depeaux (a collector from Rouen because it was too low; Pissarro knew that Depeaux had paid 15,000 Francs to Monet for a *Cathedral*[49]), another one from Isaac de Camondo in Paris and repeated "j'ai envie de garder *les Toits du vieux Rouen* pour nous"[50], "j'ai envie de la garder pour nous"[51] or "j'ai envie de le garder pour notre collection"[52]. Indeed, when the painting was exhibited at Durand-Ruel in April and March, Pissarro made it clear that he did not want to sell it. I therefore come to the conclusion that the painter saw in this painting a very strong, particular and personal view. This can be seen also in the fact that he considered this painting to be "l'oeuvre capitale"[53] of his Durand-Ruel 1896 exhibition.

The idea of a cathedral linked to the people who built it was already present in etchings made c.1886, thus relating to one of the very first trips to Rouen. Even though *La Conquête du pain* had not been published yet, it is as if Pissarro already had the idea that a medieval cathedral could represent the unity of the people. In *Rue Malpalue, à Rouen*, the roofs and spire of the cathedral spring from the houses on the right of the picture and even appear to be almost their continuation, proving that the cathedral is indeed an intrinsic part of the city (Fig. 119). Also the cathedral's belonging to the people is suggested by the figures walking in the street, inhabitants who 'belong' to the city. Because this is an etching, the overall black and white tones unite these three elements in a long-lasting relation suggested by the age of the houses, as well as that of the cathedral. In *Rue de l'Epicerie*[54], another etching from 1886, the tones give once again an idea of unity between the people and their cathedral: in fact, it is hardly possible to tell where the houses finish and the

cathedral starts (Fig. 120). The medieval houses are put on the same level as the cathedral, not only through the use of tone, but also through the perspective taken which dwarves the building. The very low point of view makes the houses in the foreground and middle ground appear very tall, while the cathedral, in the background, framed by the houses, appears to be only slightly taller than them, giving the composition an overall unity.

Perhaps the cathedral in *les Toits du vieux Rouen* does not necessarily only have the positive meaning of unity it also has in the older etchings I have mentioned. I believe it is also possible to interpret the massive bulk of the cathedral as an overwhelming presence. It occupies a vast space in the background, and hides anything that would be behind it. Compared to the multitude of small rooftops, it looks like a giant figure almost crushing them under its weight. Indeed, the building is so vast that the top of the spire is cut by the edge of the canvas, with the effect of cutting the sky in two. It seems therefore that the cathedral has taken over the sky's space. Moreover, the fact that the day is very grey makes the cathedral appear even more austere and powerful. If seen in this particular light, the painting's message can become completely different, but, interestingly, may still be connected to anarchist ideas. The massive, powerful cathedral may indeed stand as an image for the Church and its power over the people who live below it. The metaphor is very clear: in a hierarchy-bound Church the people are at the bottom, like the houses in this painting. Therefore this canvas can easily be interpreted as a representation of the dominance of the Church over the people, an authority denounced by the anarchists.

Les Toits du Vieux Rouen can therefore be considered as a metaphor for the anarchist view of society. Whether it is interpreted as a sign of the unity of the people or as a symbol of the threatening dominance of the Church, it carries a strong but discreet political message which engaged anarchists would have been able to read. For readers of Kropotkin, this painting would have had an anarchist resonance, but one should bear in mind that for most viewers this anarchist message would have been lost. One would have seen a Norman cathedral in the grey weather; but this does not mean that the anarchist message was not present. It is underlying, but Pissarro needed to sell his work, and an obvious anarchist reference would have meant that many bourgeois would not have been interested in purchasing his work.

As well as the message carried by the composition, one also needs to address Pissarro's style. His painting method is far from that of academic painters, and he is considered an Impressionist (he participated in all eight Impressionist exhibitions), even though his style went towards divisionism at the end of the 1880s (traces of this may still be seen in the dashes of colour used in particular for the roofs in the foreground of *Les Toits du Vieux Rouen*). This attachment to a forward-looking style is very much in the anarchist view too, for they rejected academism, and as we saw, considered liberty in general and in art in particular as a mark of their engagement towards anarchist ideals. Martha Ward noted in her 1996 book, *Pissarro, Neo-Impressionism and the Spaces of the Avant-Garde*, that anarchists of the end of the 19th century "celebrated Pissarro's art and career for its wholeness, which they saw to be exemplified in his diversity and open-endedness, indicative of his freedom to cultivate the self rather than repeat for the market"[55]. This idea of the importance of the 'self' is significant to the anarchist theory, but Ward's own opinion is that

Pissarro's changes of styles throughout his life related to his constant dialogue with Impressionism on the one hand, and to his desires "to put into painting the social incongruities of his personal experience"[56] on the other (a reference to the fact that Pissarro remained a foreigner in France). So the author does not appear to agree completely with the idea that Pissarro's style may be strongly linked to his political engagement. This seems to be a rather prudent road to follow, but just as most of Pissarro's works may only be read as anarchist by viewers aware of the theories of anarchism, so does his style. Whether it be divisionist or Impressionist, it may only be interpreted as anarchist if one is aware of the political engagement of the artist.

Pissarro's 1898 views of the cathedral are very different from the 1896 painting of *Les Toits du Vieux Rouen*. I am going to concentrate in particular on three paintings showing the cathedral from the Rue de l'Epicerie (an angle Monet had tried too, but was not satisfied with). What is particularly interesting in these paintings is the fact that they show either a crowd of people or an almost empty street, allowing two possible interpretations.

Rue de l'Epicerie, Rouen shows the cathedral's towers appearing behind a shopping street filled with a crowd of people (Fig. 121). The sun is shining on the cathedral and houses, the shops are open and attracting the crowds, while passers-by seem to be taking a leisurely walk in the busy street. This scene is an example of the numerous market/boulevard scenes painted by Pissarro, and Varias confirms in his 1996 book on *Paris and the anarchists* that the artist "was enthusiastic about labor and commerce", an idea dear to the anarchists, for they encouraged individual

businesses as a key to escaping the oppression from large companies. In this painting, dashes of colour, added to the light produced by the sun, turn the street into a happy gathering: red clothes worn by women, red strokes in the foreground to the left and right-hand side, red adverts on the wall near the middle of the picture, orangey roofs, a green canopy over a shop in the foreground, bright white dashes on people's clothing. This rather optimistic scene seems to be overlooked by the tall figure of the cathedral in the background. Although it occupies nearly the entire background and hides much of the sky, it does not appear menacing: the clear light makes the stone look white, and the blue sky behind looks warm and inviting. Here the viewer is under the impression that the cathedral and the people share a happy day in the sun, that they are united by the soft light falling from the sky which lights up the street, houses, shops and cathedral in a similar way. The cathedral here is certainly represented in the way Kropotkin saw it: an achievement made possible by the unity of the people. The people are depicted together, interacting, and their life is united with the cathedral their ancestors built together.

But if the cathedral stands as a symbol of anarchism in a busy, sunny street, what does it represent when the street is almost empty and the weather grey? Other views of the Rue de l'Epicerie show it almost deserted. In *La Rue de l'Epicerie à Rouen, matin, temps gris*, both the difference in weather and the lack of figures turn the exact same viewpoint of the cathedral into a picture expressing a somewhat different mood (Fig. 122). Due to the absence of sun, here most of the shop fronts, houses, canopies and street are not bathed in light, warm tones, but in much more muted, darker, altogether colder ones. The street has lost its life: a few figures can be seen, but there is none of the optimistic atmosphere that pervaded the previous painting.

Nobody is looking at the shop windows, it appears that the rare figures are only passing-by. Out of the five figures easily discernible in the foreground, four are wearing black clothing, a colour which echoes that of the paint used on many of the shop fronts. On the street, a lonely horse, its head bowed, drawing a seemingly empty cart, is waiting wearily for its owner. The cathedral, in the background, appears colder too because of the grey weather. The overall mood of this painting does not appear to be particularly positive. It could signify that dark times are upon the people, and that the cathedral, built by them, shares their fate by showing a dark appearance. Once again we have an idea of unity between the building and the people, even though the overall atmosphere of the painting is distinctly more negative than in the busy scene of the previous *Rue de l'Epicerie*.

However, a closer look at the painting proves that all may not be pessimistic and dark. The right hand-side of the painting is illuminated by a much warmer orange tone, also present on the cobbled street, then echoed on the wall above it by the advertising posters, then again by a series of orange roofs. Completed by an orange wall on the left hand-side, they frame the street, making it less cold and unappealing. These warm oranges also underline the cathedral, which is itself surrounded by patches of blue sky indicating that the weather may not be that bad. This could possibly be interpreted as a political sign; after bad weather, the sun is coming back. The cathedral, towering over the empty and still rather dark street, is pointing at the blue sky appearing on the edges of the painting and announcing better weather, just as Pissarro has used the rising sun on the title page of *Les Turpitudes Sociales*. From an anarchist viewpoint, the monument, symbolising the work of a united people, may be showing the way to better times under anarchism.

This idea of the coming of better times is reinforced by a painting such as *L'Après-midi, soleil, la Rue de l'Epicerie à Rouen* (Fig. 123). Here the perspective is slightly different, showing a view straight down the Rue de l'Epicerie to a portal of the cathedral. This time Pissarro does not show only the upper half of the cathedral: by choosing this viewpoint he insists on the cathedral being a firmly grounded monument and one which is physically, visually attached to the city to which it belongs. This belonging to the earth rather than to the skies is made obvious by the view through the long street leading the eye to the cathedral portal. Moreover, the people present on the street also create a link between the monument and the people. A cluster of figures, under the portal, underlines their importance and their attachment to the cathedral. The light here also plays a major role in making the cathedral the bearer of a political message: the sun is shining, but most of the street remains in the shade, while the façade of the cathedral and the top part of the portal are bathed in sun beams. The cathedral, a symbol of anarchism, solidly grounded into the soil it sprang from, shines and brings the light of its symbolism to the people. The warm light of this painting creates an optimistic atmosphere signifying a positive future thanks to anarchism. One should be careful however not to over-interpret the importance of the light in this particular painting. Light can indeed form part of an anarchist interpretation, but light is also what Pissarro has been studying for decades in his work. It may therefore not necessarily have as much impact as could be thought at first. Light was an essential part of Impressionism painting, but can (and possibly does here) have anarchist overtones too.

One may therefore read Pissarro's representation of Rouen cathedral as strongly anarchist, as the various views of the church illustrate various anarchist ideas. The cathedral is seen as a symbol of the unity of the people who built it; the weather changes may be interpreted as a coming of better times with the help of anarchism; the cathedral, grounded on Norman soil, belongs to the people rather than to the heavens; the emphasis on the busy street recalls the importance of everyone's freedom to build up their own business. One may however argue that such readings may only be made if one knows about anarchist ideology, but if this is probably true nowadays, Pissarro's contemporaries would have been aware of the artist's political views, especially through his friendship with Grave, editor of the anarchist publications *La Révolte* and *Les Temps Nouveaux*, and anarchism would have been a much talked about movement, in particular because of the various terrorist attacks committed by members of the movement. His paintings of Rouen cathedral may therefore certainly be interpreted as anarchist, proving that the apparently paradoxical juxtaposition of a Catholic building with anarchist ideals may well work in favour of the latter.

Maximilien Luce

The Belgian anarchist poet and art critic Emile Verhaeren "esteemed the paintings and drawings of the anarchist Maximilien Luce because they seemed to offer some of the most advanced examples of social, revolutionary art"[57]. How may this opinion fit with his representations of Notre-Dame de Paris? The façade of the Paris cathedral was the subject of a series of ten paintings he executed between 1899

and 1901 (Figs. 124, 125 and 126)[58]. This section will analyse some of them in order to understand how the anarchist artist articulated his ideals in these particular works.

These paintings are all views from the same angle, a window on the Quai St-Michel, opposite the cathedral. They all show the *parvis* and bridge in front of Notre-Dame busy with a crowd of active people. Even though the time of day changes on the various pictures, they all show people doing their business; they are scenes of activity under the tall figure of the cathedral. The building itself is motionless and very massive, which emphasises the movement emanating from the people below. So what is the role of the cathedral in these paintings? Could it be similar to the manner in which Pissarro saw it, a symbol of unity? Is it a reminder of the past, of how people used to work together towards a common goal? Is it perhaps some sort of tall motherly figure protecting the people of Paris? How can an anarchist reading be made of these paintings?

Richard Thomson wrote in 2003 that Luce's cathedrals

> (...) may have been a commercial ploy; following the market success of Monet's Rouen Cathedrals in 1895 a number of painters produced series of single monuments, and Paris' great church was an obviously saleable motif. But there may be more to these images than famous site, changing effects and commercial intent. A consistent feature of Luce's views of Notre-Dame is the presence of figures going about their business: strolling down the street, working on barges, carrying loads, looking at the *bouquinistes'* stock. In the painting now in the Musée d'Orsay the quai Saint Michel is populated by an array of likely types such as a working-class woman with a bundle of vegetables, a baker's boy making a delivery, chattering bourgeoises, a school-child going home hand-in-hand with a maid, and so on [Fig. 125]. Luce enjoins us to enjoy the vitality of the street. These paintings are almost bi-focal, the lower half representing the street's diversity, the upper the unity of towering Notre-Dame. Yet the paintings are not disjointed but harmonized; harmonized by both light, the dominant *effet*, and by ideology. Luce's figures are autonomous individuals; they have their tasks and skills; they congregate as it suits them. The cathedral both dominates and is integrated with the scene below, a benign aegis.[59]

In order to understand this point of view, it is essential to know about Luce's political ideas. It appears that the young Luce, aged only 13 during the Commune of Paris (spring of 1871), witnessed the bloody repression of the Semaine Sanglante and was durably marked by what he saw. During his military service, he made friend with Eugène Baillet, who encouraged him to join an anarchist group when they returned to Paris in 1881. From then on, Luce ranked himself amongst the anarchists. His very first paintings already showed the world of workers, such as *Le Cordonnier, mansarde à la glacière* (1883) or works depicting ragmen and more generally the people of Paris (Fig. 127). According to Verhaeren, the painter identified with the people living around him: "L'art de Luce, c'est Luce lui-même. Un faubourien, aimant Paris, sa banlieue, ses quartiers qu'on démolit, son peuple d'ouvriers, et l'âme de ce peuple, ardente et révolutionnaire."[60] Moreover, Luce saw anarchism as a way, not only for the working class, but also for artists like himself to better their positions: Varias stated in 1996 that "Luce was convinced that under anarchism the artist's position would be enhanced, since it was an especially vocal social movement seeking to correct abuses from which artists also suffered"[61]. Luce mostly used drawings as a weapon to support anarchism. He met Grave and Emile Pouget, respectively directors of *La Révolte* and *Le Père Peinard*, and started drawing for their publications in 1887. Luce's collaboration with the latter was very productive, and he gave the paper about a hundred caricature drawings between 1890 and 1900. But from 1892 a wave of anarchist terrorist attacks in Paris scared the population and the deputies voted a series of laws reinforcing repression against anarchists. Luce was classified as 'dangereux' by the police because of his involvement with *Le Père Peinard* and his anarchist friendships. He was arrested and imprisoned in July 1894

for 42 days. In August 1894, like the thirty men accused in the Procès des Trente, already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, he was eventually acquitted.

From 1895, Luce became the main contributor to *Les Temps Nouveaux*, because of his friendship with Grave. The artist was to stay there until the paper stopped publication in 1914. He made lithographs, posters, covers and drawings for the publication. Grave acknowledged the importance Luce had for the paper: "D'abord, ce fut à lui que je dus de connaître d'autres artistes, et quelques littérateurs. Toujours prêt, on pouvait lui demander n'importe quel service. Il se mettait en quatre pour vous satisfaire (...)".[62] Other publications to which Luce contributed included *La Feuille* (in 1898), *Le Libertaire* (1899), *l'Anarchie* (1905-1906), *La Voix du Peuple* (1901), and *L'Almanach de la Révolution* (1902-1905). Incidentally, these contributions happened at the time when Luce was also painting Notre-Dame de Paris, which proves the level of political engagement of the artist as he was painting a religious building. Also, just before painting most of the Notre-Dame canvases, Luce went to Belgium (1896) and visited the mining country. He was fascinated by it and painted a whole series of works representing the workers and the dark landscapes. "Cet homme sincère, fort de ses convictions politiques, ne fut pas un meneur, mais plutôt un militant discret, un humaniste"[63], concluded Aline Dardel in 2000.

Many of the views of Notre-Dame from the Quai Saint-Michel show the people of Paris in the foreground. For Luce, who devoted most of his artistic career to the depiction of the working class, these people were the essence of their city and, because of their condition, the roots of anarchism. The question of the reasons why

they were placed in front of a religious building must however be posed, for it introduces into the painting an element which may seem incongruous to an outside observer. Why is the religious building present in a painting which is apparently about an anarchist, and therefore anti-clerical, political struggle? Is it because, as Thomson suggested, cathedrals were a rather marketable subject matter at the time? A first possible answer is that Luce represented the *petites gens* of Paris in front of their best-known landmark indeed because it is a landmark. But Luce could have chosen another easily recognisable place - why not the Eiffel Tower? - to link the figures with Paris. Also, the Eiffel Tower would have been a non-religious place, possibly better than a monument representing the ancient French Catholic tradition. But let us not forget that the anarchists saw the Tower as a monument representing the capitalist state (Pissarro drew an Eiffel Tower representing capitalism on the cover of *Les Turpitudes Sociales*)[64]. It would therefore not have been a particularly good idea to show the people of Paris in front of a building attributed to capitalism. The cathedral was chosen because it did not stand for capitalism, but, as was the case with Pissarro's paintings of Rouen, for a past when people worked together towards a common goal. The building seems to look over the people, as a solid and vigilant guard, but without the negative connections 'guarding' can evoke. In some of the paintings, Notre-Dame is lit up over the slightly darker *parvis*, bridge and water (Fig. 126). This lighter colour gives it a very positive meaning, by making it appear light and not menacing whatsoever. It stands guard in a positive manner.

It is very likely that Luce was aware of Kropotkin's ideas about cathedrals, according to which they were meant to represent a time when people worked together towards the common good. If Luce did know this point of view, and as a

strongly committed anarchist it is highly likely that he did, then Notre-Dame could be in his paintings a symbol for anarchism. The diversity of the people is placed under the towering unity of Notre-Dame, the symbol of a unity achieved through common work towards a common goal. The regularity and symmetry of the cathedral contrast with the multitude of different people shown at the feet of its towers, emphasising even more the idea of diversity towards that of unity.

It is however doubtful that all the viewers who saw the series on Notre-Dame in the 1900s would have known about Kropotkin's theory. But Luce's views of the monument were very cleverly done. To someone aware of this anarchist interpretation of cathedrals, Luce's paintings can indeed be the very representation of this idea. But for a less aware viewer, the painting can still have a meaning going towards anarchist ideals. The people of Paris, each of them busy with their particular task, are independent. The idea of individuality is central to anarchism; Varias noted in 1996 that artists were attracted to the movement because "it seemed to allow people the possibility of maintaining their individual identities while fulfilling a revolutionary role"[65]. For the anarchists, individuals are able to look after themselves and do not need to be told what to do by the authorities. So the people in Luce's cathedral paintings are as many individuals, all different, but who together may be able to establish a better future. The cathedral looks upon them, but does not intrude; it does not appear as an authoritarian motif. It is well separated from the crowd, occupying its own space in the upper half of the painting. So whether the cathedral paintings represent, as was the case for Pissarro, the common goal of the people, or whether they can be read as a the importance of the independence and individuality

of the people, Luce succeeded in producing cathedral paintings with an anarchist message.

However, if Luce painted Notre-Dame and the people of Paris from an anarchist point of view in the pictures seen so far, how should the paintings of Notre-Dame that do not include figures be interpreted? There are two canvases in particular which represent Notre-Dame seen from a distance and place the cathedral in the much quieter setting of the leafy banks of the Seine, rather than the busy Quai Saint-Michel (Figs. 128 and 129).

Because they are in such a contrast with most of Luce's work, which represents for its majority the harshness of the workers' life, how can the 'quiet' cathedral pictures be read? A likely interpretation is that of a possible respite from the busy world of work. Work is present (embodied in the cathedral representing the labour of centuries past), but rest should also be considered. The setting of these two paintings is indeed very calm. On Fig. 128, a man walks his dog, and another contemplates the water, while a woman hurries past with a basket (she is the only busy element of the scene). On Fig. 129, the people walking on the quay seem to be at leisure, but there again an element recalls work: a small steamer on the Seine is making its way down the river. So it appears that even though these scenes look at first very calm and quiet, they still deal with the world the people of Paris live in. Notre-Dame probably bears the same meaning as in the previous façade views, looking over its people, whether they are busy with work or enjoying a more leisurely pace. It is also possible to see these paintings as an approach to life more pleasant than its usual grim aspect.

Maybe they even represent a positive world, that of the aftermath of the anarchist revolution? The people do not have to bear the weight of exploitation any longer, but may have an independent life which involves leisure and rest. Also, in such a society, it is possible to do one's business and contribute to society while doing so in pleasant surroundings. The world of the people does not have to be dark and treeless. Life may certainly be pleasant in an anarchist city. However, this anarchist interpretation assumes that Luce only worked towards a political agenda rather than towards his art. One must not forget that as a painter, he was interested in different effects, and that these two works may simply be a study of various effects, various views of Notre-Dame rather than politically engaged paintings. This does not mean that there may not be an anarchist message in them, but simply that Luce may have started them as non-political pictures, perhaps because of the light, of the viewpoint, or also possibly because he thought they may sell quite easily. So, even though anarchist views can be read from Luce's paintings of Notre-Dame, it does not necessarily mean that they were all started with this message in mind. The message may have been added after the impulse prompting the artist to start the picture, or, even, may sometimes only be in the eye of the viewer.

Luce's cathedral paintings, like Pissarro's, therefore also contradict the apparent paradox between the religiosity of the cathedral and anarchist ideals. His representations of Notre-Dame, whether surrounded by the people of Paris or in a quieter environment, may be read as anarchist, like the rest of his work. The cathedral is not presented as a religious building, but as a monument which appears to be watching over its people in a positive manner. These people are themselves

independent, and the link between their freedom and the cathedral may possibly remind the viewer of the medieval commune, a form of organisation admired by Kropotkin.

Beyond Pissarro and Luce: The working class and the cathedral

Pissarro and Luce's interest in the people living and working near cathedrals, and the connections the two artists made between the building and anarchist ideas, may also be read in other works made by some of their contemporaries. Even though these painters may not be known as engaged anarchists, their cathedral paintings undoubtedly show the influence of, if not specifically anarchist ideas, at least a current of denunciation of the oppression of the working class. The analysis of three paintings from the Musée Carnavalet will help us understand further how cathedrals may be inserted in works depicting the condition of the Parisian working class.

Pierre-Louis Moreau's *L'Ile de la Cité, vue du marché aux pommes* (1901) represents the life of the quays of the Seine, opposite the Ile de la Cité and Notre-Dame (Fig. 130). The picture's muted and dark tones are rather striking, producing an overall impression of gloom and cold over the viewer. The painter has worked with various greys and browns in order to generate an altogether uninviting scene. There is little doubt here that the artist's intention was to attract attention to the situation of the people represented on his canvas: the woman in the foreground, her eyes lowered, is either walking with a stoop or leaning against a stall of some kind. In any case, she looks particularly weary and unhealthy. The man on the right-hand side, whose face cannot be seen, is standing with his hands in his pockets, looking

idle; he is quite possibly unemployed. Behind them, on the river, what looks like a family appears to be gathering near a tent put up on a boat (these boats were used to bring produce to the market). One can distinguish a woman with a headscarf sitting on the deck where there are also two male figures. Another standing woman is visible on another boat on the left-hand side. The only figure who does not look miserable is the bearded man in the foreground, who appears to be wearing a jacket and possibly a tie. Compared to that of the woman on the left-hand side, his face looks rather healthy and he is even showing some kind of smile. One may assume that he is not working class, but possibly a *petit bourgeois* visitor to the market.

Above this gallery of characters, a row of houses borders the quays in front of the cathedral. These are represented in the same tones used for the rest of the painting, even though the grey used for Notre-Dame is lighter than the tones of the foreground, indicating the distance of the building. There is therefore a definite unity here between the cathedral and the poor living nearby, as if the cityscape formed a whole picture of harshness. What the viewer sees here is the unforgiving side of Paris, that of the poor. Like the tones used for the painting, their lives are lived in darkness. The cathedral is part of their lives, but does not bring them any relief in their daily struggle. Like everything else around them, it appears dark and gloomy.

Very little is known about Pierre-Louis Moreau, and it is therefore not certain what his political inclinations were. However, a painting such as this one makes it clear that he was aware of the fate of the poorer Parisians and ready to depict and possibly denounce this in his art, just as Luce when he represented workers in their jobs in many paintings during his career.

Emile Guillier (1849-1883) chose the same motif of the apple market for a painting he presented at the Salon of 1879, *Le Marché aux pommes, quai de l'Hôtel-de-Ville* (Fig 131). This scene is very much in keeping with the whole of his work, for he was described as an artist who "ne s'intéressa pas à la vie mondaine, mais aux scènes humbles de la vie quotidienne"[66]. The large canvas shows the lively street scene from a very similar angle to that chosen by Moreau, but the overall impression given by the painting is a lot more optimistic at first glance. It is a colourful scene, on which many details attract the eye. A few middle-class customers are represented (in particular the woman and her children in the foreground), but it is the depiction of the working class activities in the presence of Notre-Dame which makes this painting interesting for our study. Many different activities can be seen: the old woman selling apples in the foreground, the two men in blue drawing a handcart, a man in white who may be a cook, several people near the boats which were used to bring in the products sold. But this 'snapshot' of a busy street scene reveals more with a close examination of its figures and composition. First of all, the artist puts the emphasis on the working class and their labour. Indeed, the presence of the *petit bourgeois* woman in the foreground serves as an element allowing a comparison between her and her family on the one hand, and the workers on the other. The fact that two of the children wear blue clothing, the hue of which is very similar to the overalls worn by the two men and to the apron of the woman just behind forces the viewer to compare these figures. The fact that they are placed near the middle of the composition also contributes to attracting the eye. But aside from these central characters, Guillier also wants his viewer to notice others: the old apple seller, with her white hair and shawl, as well as the man behind the cart, picking up produce which appears to have fallen

from his baskets, are also central figures which deserve our attention. But unlike the young *petit bourgeois* woman, they do not appear to be either healthy or well-off. In fact, the viewer may even feel pity towards them. The wandering dogs, as well as the clouds in the sky, add to a possible negative mood. The sun appears to be shining, and the vivid colours used to represent the fruit and clothing may suggest a rather light atmosphere in the scene represented, but I do not believe that this is actually the case here. The contrast between the working class and the apparent idleness of the more bourgeois figures creates an opposition which cannot be missed. The date of the painting may be of significance here, for 1879 is the year when Jules Grévy was elected president. It was the beginning of a new political era, and the artist may have been interested in the republican ideal of equality, by representing what he saw as the obvious inequalities of his time.

So what could be the role of Notre-Dame in such a painting? What can it represent? It could, as was suggested at first with Luce, show that this is Paris. But a few elements suggest that the cathedral may have more than a topographical aim. The silhouette of Notre-Dame detaches itself against the sky, as the sun is setting on the capital. As it is the only dark building of the painting, it may be possible to say that it appears remote and uninviting, unlike the houses along the quays with their dozens of windows seemingly 'looking' at the activity of the market. Could it be a sign that religion is very remote from the day-to-day worries of the Parisians? The contrast between the colourful market scene and the dark cathedral implies that they may not belong to the same sphere. Moreover, the dome of the Panthéon, in the middle of the skyline, seems a lot more visible than the cathedral. It was partly a civil building in 1879 (and also still used for religious services) and therefore this may

indicate a preference on the part of the artist for secular authority, as opposed to religious authority. Another possible interpretation goes back to the republican ideals, putting people first (they occupy the foreground of the painting) rather than old institutions represented by the cathedral and the Panthéon. In 1879, as mentioned above, the Panthéon was utilized partly for religious services and partly for civic use, so it could have been considered a Catholic symbol (especially as it was initially a church) and therefore its place in the background would emphasize the importance of the people over the old institution of the Catholic Church.

Altogether, Guillier's depiction of the market is a lot more difficult to decipher than Moreau's, for its numerous elements need to be analysed separately. But it appears nonetheless to possibly be another denunciation of the conditions of the working class, and could be, too, a hint at the fate of the Catholic Church. The cathedral remains in the dark, in the background, whilst the Parisians continue with their lives of labour in the foreground. We are therefore still definitely in a rather leftist view of the ills of society, as well as in one which puts people first, emphasising their value compared to that of old institutions. This interpretation may appear paradoxical, as Guillier was a Salon artist (he started exhibiting at the 1870 Salon[67]) who trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. But even though his style is definitely 'academic' compared to Luce's or Pissarro's, I believe his representation of the working-class Parisians may be categorised as a denunciation of their conditions. It is not as obvious as in other works by other artists, but a close analysis demonstrated that his *Marché aux pommes* may be read on several levels.

Finally, this chapter concludes with Henri Dabadie's (1867-1949) *Les Travaux du métropolitain au quai Saint-Michel*, a picture which appears to present the working class in a positive light (Fig. 132). In this painting, the artist has represented Notre-Dame in the context of the construction of the first line of the Parisian metro, which took place between 1898 and 1900. The works on the Quai Saint-Michel were particularly difficult, as they involved dealing with the waters of the Seine, as an underground tunnel had to be dug out. The 'works area' of the painting is left in relative darkness, in the shade, whilst the cathedral is bathed in a yellow light, probably that of a setting sun. The contrast between the lit up building and the three workers represented on the quay is therefore quite explicit. But what does it represent? The cathedral, alone in the background, could be seen as a symbol of the past, removed from what is happening in the foreground. But this reading does not account for the importance of the light falling on the monument (implying a positive vision of the cathedral), or the fact that the cathedral and the works area are somehow united by several compositional elements. The vertical lines for instance give equal importance to the towers of the cathedral and the vertical metal stick positioned just to the side of the building (they appear to be exactly the same height). Also, the fact that Notre-Dame is positioned in the upper middle part of the composition implies its importance to the artist. Because of the very nature of the scene represented (the building of a modern transport system), the connection between the cathedral and the workers could be that of a unity between past and present. The religiosity of the cathedral does not appear to matter, given the importance of the representation of the works, but rather its connections with the city and the workers transforming it, as they are labouring in its presence. There may be

even an idea of continuity between the workers of the past, who built Notre-Dame, and those of the present, still working towards the good of the whole community, an idea which once again reflects those expressed by the anarchists.

The picture as a whole could therefore appear to carry an idea of progress, with its strong verticals and the apparent emphasis on the importance of the works being done. However, I believe a second reading can also be made, in the light of the composition chosen and the anarchist ideas discussed before. The cathedral's central position, as well as the fact that it is in the sun, mean that it bears a strong positive image, whilst the workers are left in the shade. Could this be representing the difficulty of their conditions in the 1900s, as opposed to a past, represented by the cathedral, when the working class would have been a lot happier? One may see in this picture the Parisian workmen's skilful ability to work in difficult circumstances to undertake major works, and the artist put the emphasis on the difficulties through several elements. This idea can be supported by an examination of the figures of the workers represented: they are all doing what appears to be difficult manual tasks: the three men in the top right-hand side seem to be having some difficulties with a crane, the man in the white shirt appears to be working on an anvil, whilst the one on the right hand-side is dealing with something producing smoke, quite possibly the furnace being used by the metal worker. Even though they are not described in a manner which would really emphasise their difficulties (as Luce for instance did in many paintings showing men at work), these tasks are by no means enviable, and the painter may well have wanted the viewer to see them in this manner, and therefore criticise the society which forces them to do this.

I therefore believe that Dabadie's representation of Notre-Dame in the context of the metro construction is by essence rather leftist too, whichever way it is read. The cathedral may be seen as a symbol of unity between the past and the present, connecting the workers with their ancestors who also built for the common good; it could be considered as a positive mark of the medieval past admired by the anarchists because of the unity of the people; it may also be a denunciation of the workers' conditions.

This chapter demonstrated that far from being a Catholic symbol to be hated for the authority it represented, the Gothic cathedral could and was indeed used many times by several artists as an element supporting anarchist or republican ideas. If Pissarro and Luce were the main painters studied here supporting the movement, the analysis of other works showed that the ideas they conveyed were also shared by lesser-known artists whose paintings could be read as having social overtones too. Overall, the cathedrals they chose to represent were strongly connected to the people in an idea of unity, and the cathedral acted as a symbol of the work of generations past. Their work was done towards the common good of the people as a whole, and this idea fitted the anarchist theory very well, as they were strongly opposed to the exploitation of man by man with the aim of building up capitalist wealth. The anarchists felt that the Republic was not doing enough towards "la question sociale", but one has to tread carefully with dealing with this issue, as some Republicans, as well as some Catholics did want social problems to be addressed more fully. So

dealing with the question of the conditions of the workers does not necessarily imply belonging to the far left. It is possible that Moreau, Guillier and Dabadie's representations were of a Republican or Catholic nature rather than of socialist essence. The doctrine of social Catholicism, which started as early as the 1830s, influenced Catholic authors and politicians such as de Mun who defended ideas such as the right to strike or that of a minimum wage. One may thus say that the social ideals defended by the left can also be found in other political tendencies, and that therefore the pictures representing the people or seemingly denouncing their condition may not necessarily be anarchist or socialist.

However, the anarchists also underlined the importance of another factor in the struggle of the people: that of independence. This can be seen very well in the cathedral paintings, especially Luce's, whose busy figures all had a purpose in life, and even though they formed a society together, they first and foremost were individuals whose private life mattered.

Finally, it is important to come back to the idea that the anarchist artists were also concerned about the future of their art, and that they wanted it to progress into the future, rejecting Salon academism and its static positions. Pissarro and Luce's work with divisionism are proofs that they were very keen to further their experimentation, and this too fitted with anarchism, as it saw artists (just as everyone else) as independent figures who should work for themselves towards a better future, rather than follow the established authorities. Indeed, "anarchist artists (…) believed that their artistic contributions would, in one way or another, hasten the process of change"[68].

[1] Cited in SHIKES, R. and HARPER, P., 1981, p.268.
[2] CAFIERO, C., 1880.
[3] *Déclaration des Anarchistes accusés devant le Tribunal correctionnel de Lyon*, 19 janvier 1883. The text is published on the following website: http://perso.club-internet.fr/ytak/anarchie.html (accessed on 6 December 2004).
[4] SHIKES, R. and HARPER, P., 1981, p.270.
[5] HERBERT, R.L. and E.W., 1960, p. 482.
[6] Ibid., p. 478.
[7] KROPOTKIN, P., *Paroles d'un révolté*, 1882, quoted in SHIKES, R. and HARPER, P., 1980, p. 229.
[8] PELLOUTIER, F., *L'art et la révolte*, Conference, Paris, 30 May 1896, in *L'Art Social*, pub., p.5; quoted in VARIAS, A., 1996, pp. 125-126.
[9] One may cite for instance Camille Pissarro's *Les Sans-gîtes*, a 1898 lithograph he made for the periodical *Les Temps Nouveaux*, in which he represented a homeless family wandering along a country road.
[10] According to HERBERT, R.L. and E.W. (1960) "Signac specifically related his *Temps d'harmonie* to his anarchist faith" (p. 480).They also argue that "the seascapes and port scenes of Signac and the Provençal shore and dancing nymphs of Cross are also assimilated into their hopes for a utopian society." (p. 480)
[11] KROPOTKIN, P., 1902, Chapter 5.
[12] KROPOTKINE, P., 1896, p. 18.
[13] Ibid., p. 35.
[14] Cited in SHIKES, R. and HARPER, P., 1981, p. 268.
[15] Ibid., p. 268.
[16] SHIKES, R. and HARPER, P., 1981. p.269.
[17] Letter from Camille to Lucien Pissarro, 25 July 1883, cited in REWALD, 1950, p. 59.
[18] Cited in SHIKES, R. and HARPER, P., 1981, p.270.
[19] Cited in *Artists, writers, politics – Camille Pissarro and his friends*, 1980, pp. 60-61.
[20] HERBERT, R.L. and E.W., 1960, p. 477.
[21] Cited in *Artists, writers, politics – Camille Pissarro and his friends*, 1980, p. 70-71.
[22] HERBERT, R.L. and E.W., 1960, p. 480.
[23] In SHIKES, R. and HARPER, P., 1981, p.271.
[24] SHIKES, R. and HARPER, P., 1981, p. 275.
[25] Skira Collection, Geneva.
[26] About the genesis of and the ideas contained in the *Turpitudes*, see THOMSON, R. 1982.
[27] SHIKES, R. and HARPER, P., 1981, p. 277.
[28] THOMSON, R., 1990, p. 65.
[29] Letter to Lucien Pissarro, Paris, 13 May 1891, cited in *Correspondance de Camille Pissarro*, Tome 3, 1988, p. 82.
[30] Letter to Lucien Pissarro, Rouen, 2 Oct. 1896, in *Correspondance de Camille Pissarro*, Tome 4, 1989, p. 266.
[31] Letter to Lucien Pissarro, Rouen, 8 Oct. 1896, in *Correspondance de Camille Pissarro*, Tome 4, 1989, p. 271.
[32] VARIAS, A., 1996, p. 134.
[33] Quoted by SHIKES, R. and HARPER, P., 1981, p.283.
[34] SHIKES, R. and HARPER, P., 1981, p.284.
[35] Ibid., p.284.
[36] BRETTELL, R.R., and PISSARRO, J., 1992, p.3.
[37] Letter to Lucien Pissarro, Paris, 11 May 1895, in *Correspondance de Camille Pissarro*, Tome 4, 1989, p. 69.
[38] Letter to Lucien Pissarro, Paris, 26 May 1895, in *Correspondance de Camille Pissarro*, Tome 4, 1989, pp. 75-6.
[39] Letter to Lucien Pissarro, Rouen, 24 March 1896, in *Correspondance de Camille Pissarro*, Tome 4, 1989, p. 178.
[40] Letter to Lucien Pissarro, Rouen, 26 Feb. 1896, in *Correspondance de Camille Pissarro*, Tome 4, 1989, p. 168.

[41] Letter to Lucien Pissarro, Rouen, 20 October 1896, in *Correspondance de Camille Pissarro*, Tome 4, 1989, p. 282.
[42] This is mentioned in *Artists, writers, politics – Camille Pissarro and his friends*, 1980, p. 59.
[43] First published in 1892.
[44] In *Artists, writers, politics – Camille Pissarro and his friends*, 1980, p.70, Anne Thorold mentions that Pissarro had ordered Kropotkin's *La Conquête du pain* from the Librairie Achille Heymann. This is substantiated by a letter from Camille to Lucien Pissarro dated 26 April 1892 (cited in REWALD, 1950, pp. 278-81) in which he mentions receiving this very same book from another source and therefore sending it to his son so he can read it too. Pissarro also mentions in this same letter reading *La Révolte*, another of Kropotkin's works.
[45] KROPOTKIN, P., 1906, p.7.
[46] 1897, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nancy.
[47] Extract from a lecture given at the Grand Palais, Paris, 2001. The quotes refer to a letter written by Camille to Lucien Pissarro, Rouen, 20 Oct. 1896, in *Correspondance de Camille Pissarro*, Tome 4, 1989, pp. 281-2.
[48] Letter to Lucien Pissarro, 24 March 1896, *Correspondance de Camille Pissarro*, Tome 4, 1989, p. 177.
[49] LESPINASSE, F., 2003, p. 44.
[50] Letter to Lucien, Rouen, 17 March 1896, in *Correspondance de Camille Pissarro*, Tome 4, 1989, p. 173.
[51] Letter to Lucien, Rouen, 24 March 1896, in *Correspondance de Camille Pissarro*, Tome 4, 1989, p. 177.
[52] Letter to Georges Pissarro, 27 March 1896, in *Correspondance de Camille Pissarro*, Tome 4, 1989, p. 179.
[53] Stated in a letter to Lucien, Paris, 16 April 1896, in *Correspondance de Camille Pissarro*, Tome 4, 1989, p. 189.
[54] etching, 17 x 15 cm, Cabinet des Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, c.1886.
[55] WARD, M., 1996, p. 260.
[56] Ibid., p. 260.
[57] VARIAS, A., 1996, p. 128.
[58] The catalogue of Luce's works gives ten paintings of the façade of Notre-Dame.
[59] THOMSON, R., 2003, p. 164.
[60] VERHAEREN, E., in *La Revue Blanche*, tome XX, 1899; quoted by DARDEL, A., 2000, p.10.
[61] VARIAS, A., 1996, p. 130.
[62] GRAVE, J., *Quarante ans de propagande anarchiste*, Paris, 1973, p.540; quoted by DARDEL, A., 2000, p.12.
[63] DARDEL, A., 2000, p 15.
[64] THOMSON, R., 1990, p. 103.
[65] VARIAS, A., 1996, p. 135.
[66] *Paris vu par les peintres de Corot à Foujita*, 1978.
[67] BÉNÉZIT, E., Tome 6, 1999, p. 577.
[68] VARIAS, A., 1996, p. 164.

Chapter Six
Notre-Dame de Paris: from the romantic vision to the experimental object

"Tous les yeux s'étaient levés vers le haut de l'église.
Ce qu'ils voyaient était extraordinaire. (...)
deux gouttières en gueules de monstres vomissaient sans relâche cette pluie ardente qui détachait son ruissellement argenté sur les ténèbres de la façade intérieure."
HUGO, V., *Notre-Dame de Paris*, Livre X, Chap. 4[1].

This chapter explores the image of Paris's cathedral between Victor Hugo's romantic novel published in 1831 and a range of contrasting paintings executed about seventy years later by various artists such as Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer, Albert Pierson, André Barbier, Lebourg, Frédéric Houbron and Albert Marquet, to finally look at the very particular vision that Matisse had of the same cathedral. There are many other representations of Notre-Dame de Paris, but concentration on these particular painters – some famous, others forgotten- shows a variety of changes in the way Notre-Dame was pictured. These shifts cover visionary illustration, symbolist suggestion, and modernist mark-making, indicating how the cathedral could serve a range of creative and interpretative objectives.

I have already dealt in a previous chapter with artists such as Moreau, Dabadie and Marec, who represented Paris cathedral in the context of the workers, and with Didier, Dargaud and Houbron who chose Notre-Dame as the setting or the background for historical and political events (the carrier pigeons of the siege of Paris, the reconstruction of the Hôtel de Ville and the funeral of president Félix Faure). The

present chapter thus focuses on representations of Notre-Dame which do not convey an obvious political message or show the people of Paris in a 'social' manner.

As an introduction to the representation of Notre-Dame de Paris as a significant monument in the domain of the visual arts, it is useful to start with Hugo's vision of the cathedral and how it was interpreted visually, as it is one of the main romantic novels, and certainly demonstrates the general attitude towards the Gothic and its revival. Several early editions of *Notre-Dame de Paris 1482*, first published in 1831 but still widely read at the end of the century, contain illustrations which will be interesting to analyze in order to understand how the cathedral was considered in the middle and towards the end of the 19th century. Illustrated books such as these may well have been read as children by the painters under discussion. The illustrations accompanying Hugo's text are of particular interest because they are 'imaginative' (as opposed to the more 'naturalistic' images studied later in the chapter), they do not represent Notre-Dame as it is but as the vision depicted in Hugo's novel. The illustrator imagined what Notre-Dame looked like in the 15th century, whereas in some other 'imaginative' pictures, such as Matisse's (which will be analysed at the end of this chapter), the cathedral is set in the 20th century, and the 'imaginative' part is done with a modernist use of colour and shape in particular. It is also important to understand the difference between this kind of imaginative approach and the 'naturalistic' representations, for the vision of the medieval cathedral in the context of Hugo's novel is very different from the more 'realistic' approach of other artists who placed the cathedral within a modern setting and represented it in a manner which makes it easily identifiable (although one

should bear in mind that the concept of 'naturalism' is itself very blurry). In order to understand the significance of Hugo's novel and the place he gave to Notre-Dame, this chapter will first delve into the genesis of Hugo's text itself in order to understand his fascination for the building and what it represented for him.

After Hugo's novel and its illustrations, this chapter will argue that the pictorial interest in the monument did not stop with the end of the Romantic period but continued in various ways into the 20th century. Most of the paintings studied here can be considered 'naturalistic', even though this is a difficult term. When it is used in this dissertation I understand it to be untrustworthy and changeable, as even images which may appear 'naturalistic' might use a variety of interpretative or suggestive strategies. Several of these pictures belong to the reserves of the Paris Musée Carnavalet, where I had the opportunity to study and photograph them. These particular Carnavalet pictures are new to analysis as they have never been studied before. Finally, the chapter will close with an emphasis on Matisse's extraordinarily modern vision of the monument in 1914, thus enabling us to follow the cathedral's transformation in the eyes of artists within less than a century.

The variety and quantity of material used in this chapter may seem rather diverse, but in order to cover such a vast time span and deal with very different kinds of pictures, it is necessary to have a wide range of pictorial representations. Moreover, the material analyzed here will allow for a sense of continuity in the use of the image of the cathedral from Hugo's novel to the eve of the First World War. Hugo was still widely read at the end of the 19th century, whilst generally naturalistic visions of Paris's cathedrals were being painted, thus allowing to compare and contrast the various representations made.

We are however dealing with very different kinds of works. The book illustrations have shaped ideas about Notre-Dame in several generations of readers, in what could be called an imaginary way. The 'naturalistic' paintings, on the other hand, because they claim to represent the building as it is, give it cultural validity and reinforce the idea that, even belonging to the past, it is still worth looking at. However, it is of interest to look at these apparently 'topographical' representations because there is more to them than mere topography. One must remember that 'naturalism' in itself is very varied; the range and diversity of the Carnavalet collection proves it. So images which might at first sight appear to be 'topographical' or 'accurate' are in fact representations, and as such need to be interpreted. These lead to a third category of pictures, namely those which go beyond the topographical. It seems that because Notre-Dame was so well-known, it became possible to "use" it in a new manner. The form of Notre-Dame could be played with: Lévy-Dhurmer for instance succeeded in 'representing' the cathedral without actually showing it, as it is completely shrouded in mist in *Notre-Dame, vue de la rive gauche, par temps de neige* (Fig 149). Finally, when one gets to Matisse, style becomes the dominant factor and Notre-Dame is used as a shape with which the artist can experiment.

This chapter will thus show the importance of Notre-Dame as a motif throughout the years and how this motif can take a number of different meanings, along with, but different from, the aforementioned representations of the working people of Paris and the great events which took place in the capital. This chapter is thus about one image - Notre-Dame - as a case study of how fluid and multivalent the representation of a cathedral can be.

But first of all the question of the choice of such a motif needs to be clarified. It is evident that Notre-Dame has been a source of inspiration for poets, artists and musicians[2] throughout the centuries, but where does this strong interest, this fascination even, come from? From the medieval poet François Villon[3] to Paul Claudel[4] in the early twentieth century, and even more recently in 1998 through the successful musical *Notre-Dame de Paris*[5], Paris's cathedral has appealed to generations of French and foreigners and is still a source of admiration. It is not only its architectural or religious side which inspired its admirers, but also its political connections. Notre-Dame is the main church of Paris, the seat of the archbishop and therefore the central place of worship and religious power of the capital. Indeed, for centuries the cathedral was used for important ceremonies; one can cite for instance the wedding of Mary Stuart with François II in 1558, the funeral of Louis XV in 1774, the coronation of Napoleon in 1804 or the baptism of Napoleon III's son in 1856[6]. It is also of course a monument known for its Gothic architecture, and this aspect started to have an importance with the renewed Romantic interest for medieval buildings all over Western Europe. In 1844 Viollet-le-Duc won a competition against other architects and was given, together with his colleague Lassus (1807-1857), the management of the restoration of Paris cathedral. They decided to rebuild the spire destroyed in 1791, and to recreate the exterior ornaments, such as the gargoyles, as well as the stained-glass windows. These extensive works, which were ongoing until 1864, attracted the attention of the public, and this only about a decade after the first publication of Hugo's novel.

One must wonder however why there are not that many major artists in the modernist tradition who chose Notre-Dame de Paris as a motif. One can of course cite Luce, Marquet or Matisse as artists who did, but Pissarro for instance did not paint the cathedral (even though he made dozens of paintings of the capital), and Monet ignored it too. What could be the reasons behind this? Why is it that it is almost only less famous artists who decided to paint the cathedral? One can possibly find the answer in the personal beliefs of some of the great artists. Pissarro, as a Jew, may not have been interested in a Catholic monument (although this is of course not strictly speaking true as he did paint Rouen cathedral). Perhaps the most likely explanation could be that Notre-Dame may have been seen somewhat as a cliché, something too well-known to be original and interesting. These painters were also particularly interested in modernity, the development of industrialisation, the changing face of the capital, so Notre-Dame would have appeared very far removed from these concerns.

Moreover, for the modernist painter pictures were increasingly about the painter's touch and feeling rather than the representation of 'reality'. These artists, it might conventionally be argued, are more expressive whilst the naturalistic artists are more 'objective', 'illustrative'. The latter show things more 'realistically' than modernists. So Notre-Dame being a topographical landmark, it may not have interested artists in search of subjects more suited to the representation of feelings or as vehicles for pictorial experiment. However, another, subtler case can be made: modernism is a denial of illustration and naturalism. The more 'topographical' representations of Notre-Dame are not without interpretations, and the later modernist painters actually chose Notre-Dame because of its notoriety. Notoriety made Notre-Dame useful for modernists; it could be

used as a known, yet paradoxically blank form. As a subject represented countless times throughout the 19th century, it had in effect become so well-known and recognizable that the artist could 'play' with it in an entirely new way.

Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris-1482*: the romantic vision

The ideas behind Notre-Dame de Paris

Jacques Seebacher suggests in his introduction to the 1975 *Pléiad*e edition of *Notre-Dame de Paris* that Hugo may have been inspired to write a cathedral novel thanks to two major factors. First the fact that the new king, Charles X, had just been crowned at Reims cathedral on 29 May 1825. This particular event drew Hugo's attention to cathedrals. In addition, the new monarchy's interest in the Church, as well as in medievalism, thus turning away from the Neo-Classicism of the Napoleonic era, contributed to a general renewal of interest towards medieval buildings. Second there is also the fact, connected to the restoration of the monarchy, that Hugo had started a campaign to save ancient French monuments, exalting them as national glories[7]. Indeed, Rachel Killick notes in *Hugo - Notre-Dame de Paris* that the author went on three journeys in 1825 (to Blois, Reims for the coronation and Geneva) which 'provided him with repeated first-hand experience of the wanton destruction of the national architectural heritage."[8] He was particularly shocked by the removal of sculptures from Reims cathedral lest they should topple onto the coronation procession. Following these experiences, Hugo wrote two articles, in which he tried to make his contemporaries

aware of the damage done to medieval monuments and proposed solutions to stop further destruction. In "De la Destruction des Monuments en France" (first published in 1829), the writer underlined vigorously "tous les genres de profanation, de dégradation et de ruine, [qui] menacent à-la-fois le peu qui nous reste de ces admirables monuments du moyen âge, où s'est imprimée la vieille gloire nationale, auxquels s'attachent à-la-fois la mémoire des rois, et la tradition du peuple." He called for "une administration éclairée" in order to "mettre un terme à ces désordres" thanks to a law and active surveillance of the monuments[9]. In the later "Guerre aux démolisseurs"[10] (1832), Hugo reiterated his commitment to in the ancient monuments of his nation: "quel que soit l'avenir de l'architecture, de quelque façon que nos jeunes architectes résolvent un jour la question de l'art, en attendant les monuments nouveaux, conservons les monuments anciens. Inspirons, s'il est possible, à la nation l'amour de l'architecture nationale."[11] This very advice was repeated in *Notre-Dame de Paris-1482*, in the "Note ajoutée à l'édition définitive (1832)", showing how essential this idea of protection of the heritage was to the author. Moreover, from 1835 to 1848, Hugo was an active member of the *Comité des Monuments et des Arts*, a group in charge of making an inventory of France's antiquities and protecting them against vandals[12]. In 1838 he pleaded Notre-Dame's cause and proposed the installation of a gate around the monument, whose base was dirtied by rubbish and whose statues were used as targets by children[13]. Therefore it seems that the idea behind *Notre-Dame de Paris* was partly that of a manifesto for the salvation of the French medieval heritage.

Because the novel focuses on the cathedral, and makes it a real 'character' in the plot as I will show below, one also has to wonder about Hugo's religious motives. Was

Catholic faith behind the novel too? Did the novelist want to carry a message in favour of the Church by making one of its most famous monuments the hero of an epic novel? The first edition of *Notre-Dame de Paris* was certainly seen as such by enthusiastic Catholic critics "who saw the portrayal of the Catholic Middle Ages and especially the portrait of the great cathedral as bringing welcome support to the struggling ecclesiastical cause"[14]. One such critic, Paul Lacroix, reviewed the novel when it was published in the following words

> Notre-Dame, ce géant de pierre qui lève si haut ses deux têtes dans les airs, qui s'environne d'une cour de monstres immobiles, qui fait sonner les cloches comme des voix, c'est là en quelque sorte le principal personnage du livre; on dirait qu'il a reçu la vie et l'intelligence; c'est une décoration animée et agissante; Notre-Dame a enveloppé de ténèbres les passions de Claude Frollo, Notre-Dame donne un asile à l'innocente Esméralda, Notre-Dame punit le crime de l'archidiacre qui, lancé du haut de la tour, s'accroche à la gueule d'une gouttière, se confie un moment à ce fragile appui et tombe brisé dans cette horrible chute. Notre-Dame est une véritable individualité qui semble participer de la puissance du Dieu qu'on y adore.[15]

But what seems to be an obvious religious reference to the critic of the *Mercure de France* may not actually have been so. Killick mentions the "spiritual emptiness of Hugo's cathedral, the absence of worshippers, the lack of any atmosphere of spiritual devotion" before quoting a letter sent by Lamartine to Hugo in which he tells him that "il y a de tout dans votre temple excepté un peu de religion"[16]. Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, essayist and poet, a contemporary of Hugo's, also noticed the lack of religion in his *Prospectus pour l'édition de 1832*, in which he insisted that Notre-Dame was seen by Hugo as an architectural wonder rather than a religious building: "l'idée première, vitale, l'inspiration génératrice de l'oeuvre est sans contredit l'art, l'architecture, la cathédrale, l'amour de cette cathédrale et de son architecture", and he insists that "il manque un jour céleste à cette cathédrale sainte; elle est comme éclairée en bas par les soupiraux de l'enfer."[17] One needs to add to this the fact that Hugo did not consider himself a Catholic

any more at the time he wrote the novel. In his *Journal des idées et des opinions d'un révolutionnaire de 1830*, he stated: "Mon ancienne conviction royaliste-catholique de 1820 s'est écroulée pièce par pièce depuis dix ans devant l'âge et l'expérience. Il en reste pourtant encore quelque chose dans mon esprit, mais ce n'est qu'une religieuse et poétique ruine. Je me détourne quelquefois pour le considérer avec respect, mais je n'y viens plus prier"[18]. This description fits admirably with the way the aforementioned critics saw Notre-Dame as a monument which has lost its Christian side, yet where something impressive remains in the silence. The final proof of the blatant absence of religion of the novel, and even its anti-clericalism, is to be found in the fact that it was placed on the Vatican's Index on 28 July 1834, thus receiving its consecration as an anti-clerical text.

We therefore know that Hugo did not write about a Catholic cathedral, but about an ancient monument that he wanted protected, placing it at the centre of a story set in medieval times. This choice of the Middle Ages period was also deliberate, as his publisher had ordered the young author to produce "un roman à la mode de Walter Scott"[19]. Indeed, the original scenario of the novel proves that Hugo had imagined a story line very close to Scott's *Quentin Durward*[20].

Hugo's Notre-Dame de Paris *illustrated*

The plot of Notre-Dame de Paris, revolving around the main figures of Claude Frollo, the cathedral's archdeacon, Esmeralda the gipsy, Quasimodo the bell-ringer, and Phoebus de Châteaupers, the captain of the guards, deploys itself in and immediately

around the Paris cathedral. Hence, Notre-Dame has been used by the author as more than a background to the novel. Killick in particular notes that "some have seen it less as a décor for the characters than as itself the chief protagonist."[21] This idea of presenting an inanimate object as alive is actually a Romantic notion used in painting as well as in writing. Théodore Rousseau (1812-1867) for instance was said to paint 'portraits' of trees; he gave them human qualities. The same can be said of Courbet's (1819-1877) numerous paintings of animals and fish.

Hugo's acknowledged aim for the novel was made clear in the note he added to the *édition définitive* of 1832: "Inspirons, s'il est possible, à la nation l'amour de l'architecture nationale. C'est là, l'auteur le déclare, un des buts principaux de ce livre; c'est là un des buts principaux de sa vie."[22] This idea is very obvious in the Livre III, chapter I, where the monument also takes a human appearance under the features of an old lady which men have destroyed.

Sur la face de cette vieille reine de nos cathédrales, à côté d'une ride on trouve toujours une cicatrice. *Tempus edax, homo edacior.* Ce que je traduirais volontiers ainsi: le temps est aveugle, l'homme est stupide.
Si nous avions le loisir d'examiner une à une avec le lecteur les diverses traces de destruction imprimées à l'antique église, la part du temps serait la moindre, la pire celle des hommes, surtout des hommes de l'art. Il faut bien que je dise *des hommes de l'art*, puisqu'il y a eu des individus qui ont pris la qualité d'architectes dans les deux siècles derniers. [23]

Many editions of *Notre-Dame de Paris* were published accompanied by illustrations, of which only a few can be studied here. I will look in particular at two examples. The first is an 1877 illustrated edition which combines a number of prints made several decades earlier by artists such as Aimé de Lemud and Charles Daubigny, with more recent images by illustrators such as François Chifflart. This will be contrasted with another edition with entirely new images, dating from between 1888 and 1891. These

are not the first illustrated editions of the novels, but I chose them as they belong within the time span specified in this thesis and may well have been known by the painters studied later in this chapter. Moreover, these two editions show that the interest in the Middle Ages and Hugo's novel had not diminished at the end of the 19th century and was still very popular. In fact, according to the records of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, there were at least sixteen editions of *Notre-Dame de Paris* published between 1870 and 1900, of which ten were illustrated.

When one looks at these illustrations in order to analyze them, one must remember to inquire about the readership of Hugo's novel. Who were these illustrations made for? Who read illustrated novels at the end of the 19th century? In the absence of direct documentation about this one may have to assume that illustrated books were more of a luxury than non-illustrated ones and therefore mainly read by the middle or upper classes. If this is the readership they were expecting, then publishers would certainly make sure that the quality of the illustrations was high in order to satisfy such a public. This is certainly the case in the books I am analyzing in this section, as most of the artists commissioned for pictures were well-known. So the illustrated editions of *Notre-Dame de Paris* were probably made for an educated, bourgeois readership. However, it does appear that the working class knew about Hugo very well too. Anne-Marie Thiesse notes in *Le Roman du quotidien* that Hugo is "le seul écrivain à avoir été véritablement présenté comme tel à l'école primaire dont il est (était) le 'classique' par excellence"[24]. In the same book she quotes a woman born in 1895, the daughter of 'ouvriers', who remembers with enthusiasm reading Hugo: " Hugo? oh oui! oh oui! oh oui! oh oui! je l'ai lu! qui n'a pas lu ça? *Les Misérables* et *Notre-Dame de Paris*, je les ai lus et je les ai

vus jouer."[25] *Notre-Dame de Paris* was also published as a 'livraison hebdomadaire' which allowed the working class to buy it for a moderate price[26]. Another way to access books in France at the turn of the 20th century was the use of public libraries, which was developing[27]. So we can assume that *Notre-Dame de Paris* had a very broad readership which extended beyond the bourgeoisie, even though the working-class readers may not have had ready access to the illustrated editions.

Another aspect to take into account in the analysis of these pictures is the fact that publishers most certainly had an input on the illustrations chosen. They may have chosen certain particular extracts to be illustrated, or may have asked certain artists, knowing that their style would suit the Romantic approach of the text. Also, they may have discussed with the artists what the actual illustrations would represent, in order to make sure that they would satisfy the intended readership of the book. The conclusion of this is that the artists who made the illustrations I have chosen to analyze may not have been entirely free to interpret Hugo's text. It is likely that they had to conform to instructions. However, and possibly because they were executed for a particular public in a particular manner, these illustrations will show us how the end of the 19th century saw the cathedrals of the middle ages.

One of the best-known illustrations in the 1877 volume published by Eugène Hugues is by Chifflart (1825-1901), a well-known illustrator. It represents Quasimodo repelling the attack of the beggars, *L'attaque de Notre-Dame par les truands* (1877, Fig. 133) [28], and has been described by Valérie Sueur as having a "ton épique et dramatique". She also noticed how Hugo and his illustrator had "une nostalgie commune du romantisme"[29], even though the Chifflart engravings were made more than 40 years after

the first publication of the novel[30]. So even though his illustrations were not done at the time of Romanticism, they still carry its trademarks. Indeed, Chifflart was described by Léonce Viltart as "un néo-romantique" in a late 19th century biography dedicated to the illustrator[31]. In this drawing, the cathedral, imposing and impressive, stands as a massive giant crushing its attackers. The power of the cathedral is made obvious through its sheer size detaching itself against the dark night sky. The verticality and strength of the building over the horizontality of the crowd is emphasised thanks to the two tall towers and the two streams of molten lead that Quasimodo is pouring over them to stop them entering the church. The foreground, occupied by the frightened beggars in a composition which frames Notre-Dame (thanks to the figures standing on the left-hand and right-hand corners, as well as the side of a building on the right), shows the result of the hunchback's attack. "Cette mer d'hommes venait de s'affaisser sous le métal bouillant" says Hugo, before describing the terrible and awesome scene following. "Tous les yeux s'étaient levés vers le haut de l'église. Ce qu'ils voyaient était extraordinaire. (...) deux gouttières en gueules de monstres vomissaient sans relâche cette pluie ardente qui détachait son ruissellement argenté sur les ténèbres de la façade intérieure."[32]

The vivid scene drawn by Chifflart gives a good idea of the chaos following Quasimodo's attack, and Valérie Sueur has underlined the similarity between the illustration and the text: "La représentation de la silhouette mystérieuse de la cathédrale et de la foule grouillante du parvis, qu'un éclairage surnaturel rend plus étrange encore, se fait l'écho fidèle du texte de Victor Hugo"[33]. Although the figure of the hunchback is present between the two towers, it is the cathedral which is represented as the main

protagonist of the action, taking revenge against those who attempt to steal its treasures. In the text, one of the beggars even exclaims "une vieille église fée!" before someone points out the presence of the bell-ringer, "le damné sonneur"[34]. The words used here ('fée', 'damné', as well as 'esprit' or 'démon' in the same dialogue between the beggars) points to the actions of the devil or of sorcery rather than that of religion. Indeed, the cathedral shown both in the text and in Chifflart's illustration is everything but a sanctified place. It is frightening, dark and cruel, implying that the forces of evil may be at work. But as the cathedral is a Catholic building, can it be ungodly? It certainly has a violent and sinister quality to it, but would it not be because God is showing his anger through it and through Quasimodo? The hunchback seems to be acting as God's agent in this episode, affecting retribution against the attackers for daring to assault a religious place. So what we have with this particular cathedral is a massive figure standing out against the darkness over a crowd of attackers whom it crushes with the mighty power it takes, perhaps from God. It is very much a dark cathedral of the dark ages, that of a revengeful God, a cathedral from a mysterious time as seen by a 19th century illustrator.

It does not however appear as dramatic in another 19th century edition dating between 1888 and 1891[35] illustrated by Bieler, Myrbach and Rossi[36]: the exact same scene is represented in a vignette and does not have the same power of suggestion (Fig. 134). The crowd at the foot of the towers does not seem nearly as numerous and the silhouettes are not detailed and therefore one cannot see either their suffering or their fear before the molten lead pouring from the cathedral. The monument itself, even though detaching itself against a dark night sky, does not appear as large as on

Chifflart's image and certainly does not 'crush' the beggar's silhouettes as Chifflart's representation did.

But even if the above example may not be convincing enough as far as Romanticism is concerned, other illustrators do show their Romantic vision. The 1877 volume included an engraving by Aimé de Lemud (1816-1887) entitled "Asile!"(first published in 1844, Fig. 135)[37] representing Quasimodo carrying the bohemian woman inside Notre-Dame after rescuing her from the hands of her executioner. According to his biographer, Charles de Meixmoron de Dombasle, the illustrator's "tendances mystiques", as well as his "goût pour la poésie" appear to have directed the way he chose the episodes of *Notre-Dame* which he was going to depict[38]. De Lemud was considered a Romantic by this same biographer, who wrote in 1912 that his early works "témoignent de l'emprise des idées fantaisistes et moyenâgeuses, chères au romantisme en éclosion, sur l'imagination de leur auteur."[39] He also mentions later the fact that de Lemud's lithographs "sont romantiques, au sens rénovateur du mot, parce qu'elles reflètent les aspirations d'un penseur épris de mystère et évocateur par le crayon des grandes émotions lyriques que les maîtres du verbe avaient infusé comme un sang nouveau au plus profond des âmes contemporaines (...)"[40]. Mystery and emotion are certainly present in the illustration we have here: framed by the main portal of the cathedral, the picture shows the contrast between the hunchback's ugliness and the beauty of his protégée. In a dramatic movement, under the cheers of the crowd assembled at the entrance of the church, Quasimodo carries Esméralda away. In the words of Hugo:

Quasimodo s'était arrêté sous le grand portail, ses larges pieds semblaient aussi solides sur le pavé de l'église que les lourds piliers romans. Sa grosse tête chevelue s'enfonçait dans ses épaules comme celles des lions, qui, eux aussi, ont une crinière et pas de cou. Il tenait la jeune fille toute palpitante, suspendue à ses mains calleuses, comme une draperie blanche; mais il la portait avec tant de précaution qu'il paraissait craindre de la briser ou de la faner. (...) Cependant, après quelques minutes de triomphe, Quasimodo s'était brusquement enfoncé dans l'église avec son fardeau.[41]

In this instance, the romantic cathedral is that of the medieval 'asile', a place where the justice of men stops and the condemned can expect respite. The illustration carries this idea with the human world (the cheering crowd and the houses) left in the background, whilst Quasimodo enters the cathedral, the place of asylum, whose thick portal and huge doors mark the border between the human world and the spiritual one. Away from the invasive crowds, the hunchback disappears into the empty cathedral, a place where he and Esméralda cannot be pursued. The ugliness of the human world is left behind, whilst the respite offered by the cathedral, by religion is given to the two characters. This idea certainly appealed to de Lemud as he was himself a religious man. Several elements of his biography underline this: the biographer mentions for instance "la nature profondément religieuse de Lemud"[42] as well as the fact that his marriage "fortifia les principes de foi que sa famille essentiellement religieuse lui avaient inculqués"[43]. So not only have we got here a very romantic image, but also one which reflects the views of a Catholic.

The empty cathedral appears in an engraving by Charles Daubigny entitled *Intérieur de Notre-Dame* (like Lemud's an image that probably dates from the 1840s, Fig. 136)[44] Here Frollo walks in the middle of the nave, holding a lamp. He has just spent a while in the dark and silent cathedral, on the night after Quasimodo saved the gypsy woman. He is not however aware of this development and assumes that the young woman is dead.

So, in the text, Notre-Dame becomes a frightening living creature pursuing the archdeacon in revenge for what he has done to Esméralda.

Il se mit à fuir à travers l'église. Alors il lui sembla que l'église aussi s'ébranlait, remuait, s'animait, vivait; que chaque grosse colonne devenait une patte énorme qui battait le sol de sa large spatule de pierre, et que la gigantesque cathédrale n'était plus qu'une sorte d'éléphant prodigieux, qui soufflait et marchait avec ses piliers pour pieds, ses deux tours pour trompes et l'immense drap noir pour carapaçon.[45]

Daubigny's illustration shows inspiration from both the world of the *Voyages Pittoresques* and Romanticism, for the interior of the cathedral is accurately represented, but the light from the moon pouring in from the windows, as well as the tiny figure of the priest, add to the Romantic mood of the composition. The idea present in the text that the cathedral is trying to crush Claude Frollo is certainly portrayed in the engraving too: the archdeacon, placed in the middle of the composition, appears small and frail compared to the massive pillars framing his figure to the left and right. Moreover, by making the church look very large and empty, the perspective allows the artist to insist on the loneliness of Frollo, as well as on his impression of fear and loss.

This representation, along with Chifflart's *L'attaque de Notre-Dame par les truands*, has to be seen in the context of the sublime, where man appears lost in the vastness of nature. For Chifflart Notre-Dame is seen almost as a cliff whilst for Daubigny it can easily be compared to a cave or a forest. In these 'natural' landscapes, the human being is made so insignificant that it is almost negligible. The power of nature (so here that of the cathedral) is so great that what we have here is a representation of Notre-Dame as a frightening environment. What was a religious place to begin with is transformed into a sublime 'natural' landscape; we are in the world of the fantastic, one which allows a

cathedral to become a dark living creature capable of threatening and even destroying humans.

This is therefore a rather negative view of the figure of a church, and one needs to wonder about Daubigny's personal opinion on religion. From his biography it appears that even though he married in church and had a religious funeral, Catholicism was not particularly important to him. Indeed, the only other mention of him having a connection with the Church is his visit to Rome in 1836, when he and a friend, accidentally, it seems, "reçoivent la bénédiction papale" in front of St Peter's[46]. Thus it can be concluded that if he was not particularly attached to his religion, then he could easily describe Notre-Dame as he did in *Intérieur de Notre-Dame*. It could be argued however that this was the sort of cathedral readers wanted to see. The likely readership of such an illustrated book was probably bourgeois, possibly influenced by the positivist and scientific ideas of the era. Pierre Sorlin notes in *La Société française 1840-1914* that "[le scientisme] fournit à beaucoup de bourgeois et à bien des ouvriers une raison logique pour se détourner de l'Église"[47]. So we can see this atheism taking in the Daubigny illustration the form of a man looking for something where there is actually nothing to be found (the empty cathedral standing for the emptiness of Catholicism). Indeed, Sorlin states that for adepts of scientism "la croyance en l'au-delà est tenue pour une puérilité grossière, bonne tout au plus pour les femmes et les jeunes enfants."[48] Thus we discover with Daubigny's engraving a cathedral so empty that it could actually reflect atheism, or at least agnosticism, in a society in which this idea was increasingly popular. This reading is of course possible with most of the illustrations studied here, especially those dealing with violence. A religious monument appearing to be part of a violent plot, and

even condoning it, does not give a positive image of the Church as a whole. Let us recall here the fact that the text of *Notre-Dame de Paris* was actually considered anti-clerical and put on the Vatican's Index in 1834. Seebacher even notes that the anti-clericalism of the novel was used for its "exploitation populaire" "quand la bourgeoisie ne trouvera pas meilleur repoussoir que l'Église pour établir sa République"[49].

This image can, however, possibly be read in another way. Because it is sublime, vast and Romantic, religion may actually appear in a more positive light than at first sight. The rays of light falling from the stained-glass windows on the right make the large cross at the back of the church stand out. This cross is centrally placed, and the viewer's gaze is directed towards it through the length of the nave, making it a central element of the composition. Therefore the figure of Frollo could be interpreted as that of a lost soul looking for the redemption the cross can offer. Daubigny's image may be intentionally ambivalent.

This second possible reading shows how illustrations allow different readings (though many emphasise one). This is necessary because of the various audiences reading the volume. A publisher would not want to be too engaged in a way or another in order to appeal to the greatest number of readers.

The idea of destruction mentioned with Chifflart appears again with the murder of Jehan, Frollo's brother. Even though he is killed by Quasimodo during the assault of the cathedral by the beggars, Notre-Dame is part of his murder and illustrations underline the cruelty and violence of the killing.

On vit Quasimodo debout sur le parapet de la galerie, qui d'une seule main tenait l'écolier par les pieds, en le faisant tourner sur l'abîme comme une fronde; puis on entendit un bruit comme celui d'une boîte osseuse qui éclate contre un mur, et l'on vit tomber quelque chose qui s'arrêta au tiers de la chute à une saillie de l'architecture. C'était un corps mort qui resta accroché là, plié en deux, les reins brisés, le crâne vide.[50]

If one looks at the illustrations representing this episode, the cathedral appears once again as a dark force. An engraving by Gustave Brion (1824-1877)[51] entitled *Jehan précipité* (1877, Fig. 137)[52] underlines the youth and innocence of Jehan in contrast to the twisted body of Quasimodo and the sombre silhouette of the cathedral in the background. Jehan wears white and has blond hair, whilst the hunchback's features are invisible; all that can be seen is his deformed body. In the background, the massive cathedral is not only a witness to the murder, but also an actor as the text explains its role in the killing. This idea is reinforced by the fact that the hunchback's body is actually mirrored by the architecture: the stonework on the right hand side parallels the shape of his body, therefore implying a connection between Quasimodo's action and the cathedral.

A similar role is devoted to Notre-Dame in the murder of Claude Frollo. Whilst witnessing Esméralda's execution from the cathedral's tower, Quasimodo sees the archdeacon laugh, "un rire de démon", and it is more than he can bear:

(...) se ruant sur lui avec fureur, de ses deux grosses mains il le poussa par le dos dans l'abîme sur lequel dom Claude était penché.
Le prêtre cria: -Damnation! et tomba.
La gouttière au-dessus de laquelle il se trouvait l'arrêta dans sa chute. Il s'y accrocha avec des mains désespérées (...). [53]

After desperately trying to pull himself back up, the priest finally has to give up. But in effect, it is a drainpipe which, giving way, hurls the man towards the ground. So once again the cathedral is contributing to the killing of a character opposed to Quasimodo's

happiness. Two rather dramatic illustrations underline the cathedral's dangerous aspect. *Claude Frollo tombe* (1877, Fig. 138) by Aimé de Lemud[54] shows the black-clad archdeacon struggling on the drainpipe whilst Quasimodo, just above him, makes no attempt to help but looks at the gypsy. De Lemud's biographer describes this illustration as "la figure 'formidable et vengeresse' de Quasimodo précipitant Claude Frollo du haut de la balustrade qui domine la forêt des arceaux, des tourelles et des gouttières fantastiques."[55] Frollo's dangerous position is emphasised by the impression of height given by the artist, as the tower seems lost in the clouds. The idea of evil, already expressed in the text with expressions such as "un rire de démon" or "figure formidable et vengeresse", is carried through the illustration with Quasimodo's horrible face and a number of black birds resting or flying around the tower. In fact, Quasimodo is depicted very much as a gargoyle on top of the cathedral. The height of the tower offers no chance of a salvation for Frollo, he is quite obviously condemned.

Another illustration actually shows him fall from the tower (Fig. 139)[56], in a vision focusing even more on his evil side. In this particular drawing, Frollo's silhouette falling from the tower resembles that of a demon in his black cloak. Once again the cathedral's sheer height is emphasised with the houses below looking rather small, whilst its dark side plays a role too, as the top of the tower looks rather black and imposing. Notre-Dame, powerful and imposing, appears like the one powerful actor who cannot be defeated.

So what we have in Hugo's novel is not only a cathedral which plays an active part in the plot, as these examples showed, but also one which one should beware of. It certainly is not represented as a religious cathedral for prayer, but one with a much

darker agenda. Present at all the major stages of the story, Notre-Dame projects its dark mass onto the lives of the protagonists. So this Romantic cathedral is very particular: it certainly is, as we saw, a vehicle for promoting the protection of ancient buildings, but also has a darker side, that of a monument so impressive and magical to the author of the novel that he made it a real character.

It is undeniable that Hugo's novel contributed to making Notre-Dame popular amongst the people of France. The Romantic story surrounding the cathedral may therefore well have had an impact on the following generations of artists who chose to represent the monument. Notre-Dame was not any more just a religious or political symbol, but also a place for romanticism and imagination, a monument to admire, a piece of architecture to contemplate. The hugely popular novel helped transform the ancient crumbling cathedral into a monument fit for a new life in the 19th century. The next section will therefore explore how a number of French painters represented Paris cathedral in their very own manner, bearing witness to the fact that Notre-Dame was now established as a cultural icon in the educated mind of the literate bourgeoisie. Notre-Dame was also open to varied and flexible interpretations.

Notre-Dame as a naturalistic vision

This second part will look away from the illustrations to study Notre-Dame as a naturalistic vision. These depictions of the Paris cathedral were all made circa 1900 by artists who represented it in a naturalistic way. However fin-de-siècle naturalism was

extremely diverse in style and open to interpretations. This section will attempt to analyze paintings as different as the more 'Romantic' vision of Houbron and Lévy-Dhurmer's play on the image of Notre-Dame. Such images may seem naturalistic and therefore straightforward but, once analyzed, reveal their complexity. The following section will start with painters who still depicted Notre-Dame in a rather topographical manner, before delving into representations where Notre-Dame starts to be the object of pictorial experiments. We will go from the ostensibly 'naturalistic' to the experimentation, in order to prove that Paris's cathedral had become such a well-known, recognizable subject that artists could feel free to use it in a more experimental manner.

Frédéric Houbron: in line with the Romantics

The first painting I want to deal with here is *Notre-Dame*, painted in 1901 by Frédéric Houbron (Fig. 140), for it carries the same idea of impressiveness that was shown in the various illustrations to Hugo's novel. Houbron (c. 1851-1908) painted varied subjects from history paintings to architecture and landscapes and exhibited from 1877 at the Salon de Paris and then at the Salon des artistes français. He represented numerous views of various picturesque aspects of Paris in oil, watercolour or pencil[57].

This is an imposing view of the cathedral from the left-hand side of the *parvis*, but the angle used, as well as the position of the artist very close to the building, contributes to making the cathedral look particularly massive. In fact, even though it looks very precise the perspective used exaggerates the size of the top of the tower and makes it appear even more imposing than it is. The artist has a "façon nette d'indiquer les lignes de force de sa composition", as Schurr noted in *Les petits maîtres de la peinture*[58]. Here

the tower rises above the *parvis* and the small figures of a number of Parisians, the contrast thus accentuating again the size of the building. Moreover, the idea of solidity is conveyed through the angularity of the cathedral's shape, as well as by the uniformity of the colour of the stone. This natural stone colour, set against a sky of small white clouds on a blue background, further emphasises the grandeur and majesty of the church, by making it stand out against the background. Other effects are also used to convey the same idea of majesty: the figures walking past the cathedral seem very small, the omnibus drawn by three horses as well as the houses on the other side of the Seine seem dwarfed by the enormous presence of the stone giant. However, if one compares the size of these figures to those present on a postcard dated 1915 (Fig. 141), one will realise that Houbron has not actually 'shrunk' his silhouettes. They are represented to scale; the difference between the photograph and the painting is the choice made by the artist to represent the tower in a distorted perspective, which in turn distorts one's view of the figures.

This representation is quite similar to Chifflart's *L'Attaque de Notre-Dame par les truands* in the sense that it shows the sheer power exuded by the monument. The violence of the attackers has of course disappeared here, leaving the viewer with a calm view, but the strength of Notre-Dame remains, with the underlying idea of the presence of the sublime, as Notre-Dame is seen here once again as a sheer cliff face. Indeed, the strength of the monument may even be all the more obvious, given that the setting for the cathedral is that of a calm street on a sunny day. In such surroundings, the viewer's eye has to be attracted by Notre-Dame because nothing else retains his attention. But why has the artist chosen to represent the cathedral as a powerful object? Is he making a

statement about religion? Is he emphasising its power? Or is he focusing on the architecture and the impressive skills of medieval men who were able to build this, dwarfing the modern world in comparison?

The answer may not be easy to give, as very little is known about the artist. He did however represent Notre-Dame too in another painting studied in this thesis, *Les Funérailles du président Félix Faure à Notre-Dame* (1899), in which, as we saw in Chapter Three, he mixed religiosity and patriotism (Fig. 77). In this painting, he was already insisting on the sheer size of the cathedral, with a vertical canvas too. The message of the picture was very much about the possible co-existence of Republicanism and the Church. With the 1901 Notre-Dame painting, such a reading would be difficult, but it is however possible to see the cathedral as co-existing with modernity. Houbron decided not to represent the interior of the cathedral, which would have insisted on its religiosity, but to take a step back and look at the building in its setting. So his cathedral is surely impressive enough, but at the same time one cannot help but noticing the details which root it into modern times. The human figures, the horse-drawn carriage and the 19th-century houses in the background help to anchor the medieval building into the newly-born 20th century. One cannot help but notice however that Notre-Dame occupies a larger place on the canvas than all the modern elements together. Would there be a particular reason for this? Taking into account the fact that the monument looks extremely impressive, and possibly even looms over the passers-by, it could be acting as a reminder of the ever-present power of the Church, a power which does not appear to be particularly positive but possibly frightening. However if one looks at the way in which Houbron has insisted on detailing the cathedral, representing it in its glory on a

beautiful day, the interpretation changes: what the viewer sees is not any more the all-powerful Church but a reminder of the skills of his ancestors. The beautiful medieval building rises above everything new and modern. But these two interpretations, even if they are supported by the image itself, ignore the fall in church attendance witnessed during the Third Republic. Claude Langlois estimates in *Histoire de la France religieuse* that between 1860 and 1880 the number of French "pascalisants" was around 52%[59]. But the reality of French religious practice differed enormously from region to region. In 1903 an inquest led by a group of atheists came to the perhaps exaggerated conclusion that only 2.4% of the inhabitants of the Seine-et-Oise département regularly attended church services[60], whilst in Paris in 1875 15% of couples married in the *mairie* and not in church, and 15% of children were not baptised[61]. In comparison, Nantes had a very high "pratique pascale" rate of 86% between 1839 and 1863[62]. However Sorlin also notes in *La Société Française 1840-1914* that "entre 1893 et 1910, il est courant d'entendre des prédicateurs ou des journalistes présenter notre pays comme une terre de mission"[63]. Therefore a much more likely interpretation of Houbron's painting would be that of a cathedral still involved in the modern world, but somehow detached from it. So the artist shows us the cathedral in the city, but a cathedral which may appear to belong to another time. It looks so foreign to its surroundings, a beautiful carved object in the busy modern city, that it could easily reflect the position of the Church around the 1900s: still present, but distant, out of touch with the modern world. In this way, this cathedral is rather close to Hugo's and that of his illustrators, as it combines the grandeur of the building with an absence or disappearance of religiosity

Albert Pierson: a reading on several layers

The painting by Albert Pierson, *Notre-Dame, vue du quai de la Tournelle, pendant les inondations de 1910* (1910, Fig. 142) is another naturalist work representing Paris cathedral in the midst of the devastating 1910 flooding of the capital. However, what seems at first a rather ordinary image turns into a painting with a possible philosophical or even religious message as a study of the several 'layers' implicit in the painting will show. Pierson was a 'peintre de paysages' and a member of the Artistes Français from 1906, in whose Salon he exhibited[64].

At the end of January 1910 the Seine started to rise and reached levels not seen since 1658. This created havoc in the centre of Paris as many streets were flooded, houses collapsed, the métro was under water and people had to use boats. *Le Monde illustré* dated 5 February 1910 describes the damage in the following terms: "(...) l'ascension des eaux causa de véritables désastres. Les services publics furent arrêtés en grande partie. Les moyens de transport, si nécessaires aux Parisiens et à la vie moderne, furent réduits à leur plus simple expression. En banlieue, des familles entières se trouvèrent sans asile."[65]

Pierson's representation gives a good idea of the extent of the damage, as one can only see the top of a lamp-post as well as a house flooded up to the first floor. If one looks at postcards and photographs from the time, one can easily see how consistent Pierson was in his representation. Searching the collections of postcard dealers, I have found in particular two photographs (Figs. 143 and 144) showing the exact spot Pierson chose for his work. Both the painting and the photographs reveal the amazing scene of a

half-submerged house and a redundant *ponton-débarcadère*[66] lost in the midst of the waters. It is interesting too to note that Pierson chose to cut out the quayside entirely, whilst it is visible on both photographs, and that he seems to have added to his composition the top of the lamp-post, a useful device which not only anchors the painting in the foreground but also underlines the height reached by the flood.

Pierson has been rather unusual in the scene he chose to paint, as most postcards and photographs show streets and bridges; only a few have Notre-Dame as a background. So what could be the reason for choosing this particular viewpoint? Does he want to make a particular statement about the cathedral?

It is quite certain that if Pierson had wanted to insist on the fate of the people of Paris during the floods, he would have chosen another subject, like a flooded street or people in a boat. But the view he has selected does not involve any figures, even though the tough situation is implied in the semi-submerged house. So rather than focusing on the difficulties that the Parisians are facing, he puts the emphasis on the Seine and the cathedral. The river occupies most of the bottom half of the painting, whilst the cathedral is the main element of the background. It is as if the artist had wanted to connect two forces together, that of the spiritual world and that of nature, powers which are both beyond humanity. The powers of nature have forced the humans to flee, leaving only empty houses, and the power of the Church survives above the chaos. If this really is Pierson's vision, then this painting has much more to it than a simple journalistic quality. It is about life and death and about the powerlessness of men before nature and God. Several elements of the painting support this account: the river appears as an infinite entity; the painter has only represented part of it and the viewer therefore

imagines that it extends to much more than what is shown. Secondly, the cathedral does not appear as being flooded but as rising above the waters, reaching so high that the top of the spire is not on the canvas. Indeed, people who had lived through the events would have known that Notre-Dame was not actually flooded, only its surroundings were[67]. This is very much implied in the painting, making the cathedral an entity superior to the human world. This superiority was actually confirmed in effect, on 28 January 1910, as the water level was still rising, when a mass was celebrated at Notre-Dame in the hope that prayers would help: "Alors Mgr. Amette, archevêque de Paris, convoque les fidèles, se rend à Notre-Dame et y célèbre, dans l'après-midi, un salut dit "de pénitence". Devant l'ampleur du désastre et l'impuissance des hommes il ne reste plus qu'à implorer la miséricorde divine."[68]

However, humans may not be as powerless as it seems in front of the two forces. I believe the floating *ponton-débarcadère* on the right hand side may be the key to this painting. With its reddish-brown shelter, it echoes the colours of the flooded house walls on the left, and its brown hull echoes the colour of the roof of the same house. This deliberately draws the attention to it, implying its link with the world of humanity. Indeed, this pontoon could well be a modern Noah's Ark. Whilst the flooded house cannot help humans, the pontoon appears as their only chance. And as we have already noticed that the cathedral was also above the waters, the link between the floating object and religion appears. In the midst of such a natural disaster, the recourse to religion may be the only way out. In fact, Pierson may be warning his contemporaries against powers which are above them and against which not much can be done:

So this painting can easily appear as a reminder of how devastating the forces of nature can be, even in a modern city. Pierson may well be warning the Parisians that nothing can be safe from such a disaster; the submerged lamp-post which can easily be seen as a symbol for modernity is out of order, implying that even though man has progressed a lot throughout the centuries, nothing should be taken for granted. A good example of this was the complete shutdown of public transportation in the affected areas. Parisians caught in a métro stopped because of the water "maugréent contre ces modernes transports en commun" which they label "solubles dans l'eau"[69], whilst the "gares de Lyon et d'Orléans-Austerlitz furent transformées en presqu'îles (...) celle d'Orsay fut entièrement envahie par les eaux de la Seine et de la Bièvre réunies et Saint-Lazare eut devant elle un vaste lac formé par de véritables torrents que vomissaient les entrées du Métropolitain."[70] In Pierson's representation, only the floating pontoon and the cathedral appear as safe havens and carry the image of Noah's Ark: in a submerged world only the ones having taken refuge in the Ark (or in other words in religion) will be saved.

But is this religious reading in keeping with Albert Pierson's opinions? Was he a religious man at all? Unfortunately, only very few biographical details are available, and it will be impossible to answer this question with certainty. However, one can certainly suppose that if he was not religious, then the painting has to be reinterpreted in a different light, in which the cathedral will not stand for the religious building that it is but rather as a reminder of the solidity, strength and duration of medieval buildings. Pierson may then want to show the contrast between what has lasted through the centuries and the modernity which will not. The cathedral, anchored in the city (the

flying buttresses of the choir emphasise this idea of rooting) has survived the flood whilst the modern house and the lamp-post have not. So we are actually coming to the same conclusion as above: even with a non-Christian reading of the painting, we can conclude that Pierson highly values the past and not so much the present, as if the modern constructions were destined to disappear but the older ones to remain. It could be a call for his contemporaries to revalue what matters, as their so-called 'modernity' can disappear so fast.

André Barbier: Coucher de soleil sur la Seine, derrière Notre-Dame

André Barbier (1883-1970) is another artist who used Notre-Dame in a naturalistic way in the context of the modern world surrounding it, but gives to his approach a completely different tone to that used by Pierson. Indeed, the cathedral represented by Barbier does not emphasise the negative side of modernity, but on the contrary, I believe, makes the old and the new work together in harmony (Fig. 145).

Barbier is described as an Impressionist who was also an acquaintance of Monet's. His biography in E. Bénézit underlines "son admiration pour Claude Monet, le Monet des vues de Londres, et par-delà pour le Turner des brumes, influences qui ne se résolvent pas en une simple imitation, mais au contraire prouve sa compréhension intime des subtilités de l'impressionnisme et sa sensibilité personnelle aux jeux sans fin de la lumière dans la variation de ses vibrations et irisations selon l'heure, l'atmosphère, les saisons et le lieux."[71] This understanding of the light is no doubt the main component of the painting I want to study here: *Coucher de soleil sur la Seine, derrière Notre-Dame*,

painted in 1900. This extraordinarily bright painting shows Notre-Dame as the background to the river Seine probably viewed from a bridge. It is interesting to note how large the river looks, almost as if it was a harbour. The water covers about half the painting, whilst the background is occupied by indistinct buildings and Notre-Dame. There are two barges on the river, which are placed near the middle of the painting. They lead the eye along the river towards the background and the cathedral. The smoke rising from the second boat is parallel to Notre-Dame and these features put together seem to form the 'heart' of the painting, as it is a cluster of elements to which the eye is drawn. The smoke, associated to the rising towers and spire, can be read as making a statement about the coexistence of the old and the new. This is of course emphasised by the uniformity of the bright yellow which unifies all elements of the painting by giving them the same glow. I am speaking about a 'glow' because this is certainly not a negative view of modernity. The whole picture is shining in án amazingly bright hue which encompasses everything from the cathedral to the water carrying the boats. There seems to be a union between past and present, an association between the sky, the water and the earth. This can therefore be seen as a very positive representation of Notre-Dame in its surroundings, as the painter chose to cover the city in the warmth of his yellows and oranges. One must also note that Barbier was only about 17 when he painted this, and that this could account for the optimism of this cityscape. A young man from the provinces (he was born in Arras), freshly arrived in Paris, he may have been very excited about coming to the capital to practise his art. In this case some of Paris's main landmarks (the cathedral and the Seine), which he may have only just discovered, are to him symbols of this first achievement in experimental colour painting and the yellow

glow the expectation of an equally bright future. I very much doubt that there are any political or religious undertones to this picture; to me this is the work of a happy, enthusiastic young man who saw the capital as a great hope. This painting is therefore 'naturalistic' because it depicts a recognizable place, but here the notion of 'naturalism' is rather stretched, as it appears that the young painter has not painted exactly what he saw, but also perhaps the state of mind he was in, and his personal view on the scene.

Lebourg: Notre-Dame in autumn

Notre-Dame de Paris was painted by Lebourg many times, but three canvases have been chosen here to give a concentrated view of Lebourg's approach of Notre-Dame. Two pictures represent the cathedral in winter; they are entitled *Notre-Dame de Paris, neige* (c.1890) and *Notre-Dame de Paris. Effet de neige, le soir* (c.1897; Figs. 146 and 147). The third one, *Notre-Dame de Paris vue du quai de la Tournelle – Automne* (c.1890-1900) shows a bright autumn day (Fig. 148). The following section will look at the autumnal scene, as the snowy cityscapes will be studied afterwards along with those by Lévy-Dhurmer and Marquet.

Lebourg's love for cathedrals was noted by several of his critics, and Chapter Four presented a few of his representations of Rouen cathedral. The artist was described as a "fervent admirateur de l'art gothique" who "a consacré de très nombreuses toiles à la représentation de Paris et de Notre-Dame."[72] *Notre-Dame de Paris vue du quai de la Tournelle – Automne* is a very light painting giving a rather unusual perspective on the

cathedral: it is seen through the almost bare branches of a tree whilst the right hand-side of the canvas is occupied by buildings on either side of the quay. Because Notre-Dame is half-hidden by the tree and in the background, and also because the light falling on the various elements of the painting is rather equal everywhere, the cathedral does not appear to be the main feature of this composition (even though the title suggests otherwise). The beauty of the autumnal light falling on Paris, and its effects on various surfaces such as the tree, the water, the sky and the buildings appears to be the main element Lebourg wanted to emphasise. Indeed, his love for light, and especially winter light, has been acknowledged: "Comme Sisley et Monet, il aime la lumière de l'hiver. Depuis le voyage qu'il a fait en Auvergne en 1884, il est épris du gris de la pluie et du dégel, des teintes bleues, violettes et roses que projette la lumière de l'hiver."[73] The second part of this quote is of course the one to retain here, as this autumnal view certainly contain these colourful yet delicate hues.

The Notre-Dame we have here is seen in the context of a beautiful sunny day and in its surroundings. There are no figures, but this is not however a timeless scene as the modern houses on the right place this image firmly at the end of the 19th century. So how can we interpret this scene? Is this just a beautiful sunny day when the quality of the light appealed particularly to the artist? Can we read anything else in this view of Notre-Dame?

It may be possible to read this work on a deeper level if one considers the viewpoint used, which does not focus only on Notre-Dame but gives the viewer a much larger perspective on the setting of the scene. The painter deliberately placed the monument in its very Parisian setting, therefore emphasising the link between the city and its

cathedral. Notre-Dame appears therefore as a monument firmly placed in the metropolis, of which it is a fundamental element. This idea is emphasised by the equal light falling on all the features represented, as if they were all as important as one another. The tree, even though placed in the foreground, does not seem to have more importance than the cathedral or the buildings behind as it seems to be dissolving into the light of the day, its thin branches losing themselves into the sky. Equally, the reddish building on the right may have compromised the equilibrium of the whole scene, but placed as it is, its prominence fails to destroy the balance: its possibly heavy presence is counterbalanced by that of the tree and bridge on the other side, whilst the red bricks have been toned down by the artist. Thus we have here a very harmonious picture in which Notre-Dame works as an element of the whole scene rather than the main feature, placing itself in the surroundings of a modern Paris.

Notre-Dame in winter: Lebourg, Lévy-Dhurmer and Marquet

The previous section mentioned Lebourg's love for winter light as well as his admiration for Gothic cathedrals; it is therefore logical that he should have painted several views of Notre-Dame in the snow. In fact, there seem to be as many as twenty canvases of Paris cathedral in the snow[74]. Two of these will be studied along with Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer and Marquet's representation of the same subject, as they all show ostensibly naturalistic views of Paris cathedral in winter.

Lebourg's canvases were decribed as "des vues de Notre-Dame de Paris enneigée remarquables faisant usage d'une palette violacée du plus bel effet"[75], and this comment

can easily be understood if one looks at the painting owned by the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen. In *Notre-Dame de Paris, neige* (c. 1890-1900), "Lebourg captures all the rainbow colours of the snow at Notre Dame cathedral in Paris"[76]: the grey cathedral detaches itself on an orange-pink sky whilst the snow-covered quays and roofs of the monument offer the painter the opportunity to represent the aspects of the thick snow cover (Fig. 146). The whole picture appears to be softened by the pink light. In *Notre-Dame de Paris. Effet de neige, le soir* (c.1897), the viewpoint remains exactly the same but slight changes in the setting and weather can be observed (Fig. 147). The atmosphere is foggier and the sky grey, making this painting altogether less inviting and less warm than the first. This possibly represents evening as the small building on the quay is lit up. There are two other lights, one probably right by the side of the river, the other on the left. The two lights in the centre are in contrast with the very muted tones of the painting and as such underline the silhouette of the cathedral which rises just behind them. Notre-Dame only appears as a grey silhouette on an overcast sky. This image presents the cathedral as a rather mysterious object, even ghostly as its mass rises in the mist. This is not however a frightening sight: the tones used remain soft, there are no aggressive hues and the bright yellow of the three lights is both reassuring and comforting, bringing some warmth to an otherwise very bleak scene. One could also argue that in spite of its possibly ghostly appearance, Notre-Dame is actually a comforting, because well-known, presence in this dark, cold evening.

The Rouen painting, because of its much warmer tones, does not seem to convey exactly the same sort of message. The picture is altogether more inviting, particularly because of the warm hue of the sky, and therefore brings this warmth to the rest of the

painting. The cathedral is therefore not a frightening sight but an element sharing the same tonality as the rest of the painting.

But should one stay with these superficial explanations? Can there be anything more to these two paintings, can Notre-Dame carry a message beyond the naturalistic representation? Does this viewpoint and the season used bring a particular message to the viewer? If Lebourg was a religious man, then the solitary, snow-covered silhouette of the cathedral, standing above the bleak winter scene could stand for the union between religious and earthly matters. The cathedral appears to be very much part of the scene, the tones used to paint it are similar to those used for the rest of the painting, therefore implying a connection between the religious building and the more mundane world of the humans. One could therefore see there a religion close to the people, sharing even the harshness of winter with them. Moreover one could see the well-known silhouette of Notre-Dame as a comforting presence in the winter evening.

I am not however convinced by this interpretation, and for one particular reason: the very bleak and very cold way in which these two scenes have been depicted (even though the Rouen picture is not as cold as the Carnavalet one). Because of the coldness of the two depictions, and because Notre-Dame is an intrinsic part of the bleak cityscape, I believe that this is not a positive image of the Church. On the contrary, if anything, the cathedral is presented as a rather remote, sombre monument which echoes the coldness of the foreground. The Church does not look inviting or like a consoling figure, it only stands, rigid and cold, like the rest of the scene. There is no sign of life here, apart from the three small lights burning in the Carnavalet picture, so one can

conclude that warmth, and therefore life and hope, is not to be found either outside on the quay or in the cathedral but only possibly by one of the fires.

It seems unlikely that there is a positive religious message in these cathedrals at all. They belong to a ghostly world composed of snow, ice and darkness, and this is especially obvious in the Carnavalet picture. If these cathedrals do stand as a symbol for the Church, then the Church they represent is not one made of love and care, but an unappealing, sombre institution.

Moreover, one must bear in mind the fact that there are no architectural details in these representations by Lebourg. This is not the way he is interested in the monument. His stylistic approach is much more modernist. The absence of details shows that the artist is more concerned about how he paints than the 'topographical' details of what he paints. This is interesting because it allows a parallel to be drawn between Lebourg's work on cathedrals and that of Lévy-Dhurmer, Marquet and Matisse. More than only a naturalistic approach (even though we have seen that 'naturalistic' paintings actually carried meanings), we start to see with Lebourg an artist using the figure of Notre-Dame de Paris for pictorial experimentation. Here he uses only the shape of the monument, knowing that it will be recognized anyway, and that he can therefore use it to create a particular mood or contribute to a particular meaning. The study of Lévy-Dhurmer, Marquet and Matisse will allow me to continue this line of interpretation even further. We have gone from the Romantism of the illustrations, to the 'naturalism' of paintings to reach Symbolism with Lévy-Dhurmer. We will finally see how Notre-Dame fits into Fauvism with Marquet and Cubism with Matisse.

I have mentioned earlier in this section the fact that Notre-Dame looked rather ghostly in the Carnavalet painting (due to the fact that Lebourg, as I said, was more interested in the mood given to his cathedral than to the actual details); this idea can certainly be found again in two other snow scenes representing the cathedral: *Notre-Dame, vue de la rive gauche, par temps de neige* (c. 1910-1920) and *Notre-Dame in Winter*, (c.1900) by Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer (Figs. 149 and 150).

These two paintings are interesting for two particular reasons: firstly the fact that they were done by a Jewish artist and secondly that even though they are representations of Notre-Dame the cathedral itself is hardly visible, especially in *Notre-Dame, vue de la rive gauche, par temps de neige*, which close study of the painting at the Musée Carnavalet makes clear.

Lévy-Dhurmer was a varied artist who often used a naturalistic style to represent imaginative, evocative subjects, which is a kind of symbolism. Lévy-Dhurmer's work falls into several categories: "idealist, symbolist and portraitist"[77]". Jean Chatelain describes Lévy-Dhurmer as an artist in whose work "le goût de la technique assurée" is combined with "le sentiment que l'art doit d'abord exprimer la sensibilité même de l'artiste". This leads to the production of "des oeuvres personnelles, intimes, souvent marquées de mélancolie et de nostalgie"[78]. This approach is certainly visible in the paintings of Notre-Dame. The Carnavalet picture is rather precise in what it depicts (the snow-covered trees, the stalls of the *bouquinistes* and the snowfall) whilst at the same time one can certainly intuit the artist's sensibility through the mysterious mist enveloping the scene.

But what does this approach reveal? What does a cathedral stand for in the eyes of such an artist? The answer may be found in critical accounts of Lévy-Dhurmer's work. In 1897 Gabriel Mourey wrote an article about the artist in which he stated that Lévy-Dhurmer "became impressed with the great truth, that the artist must realise at every instant that he can afford to neglect nothing, that everything has a deep meaning, and that the artist's duty is to reveal this to us". This is a Symbolist interpretation of Lévy-Dhurmer's work and means that his representations of Notre-Dame must have a meaning, but in what direction should we look for it?

There may be a possible answer in an 1896 article by Henry Eon published in *La Plume*. Reporting on a Lévy-Dhurmer exhibition, the critic describes the painter as a "mystique"[79]. This word describes a person "dont le caractère est exalté, qui recherche l'absolu en toutes choses"[80]. How could this apply to the snowy view of Notre-Dame? If Lévy-Dhurmer is looking for the very essence of his subject, as the definition of 'mystique' suggests, then representing Notre-Dame in the mist, almost invisible, has to say something about the identity of the cathedral. Hidden from view, its essence has to be somewhat of a mystery. However, because the artist is using an already very famous silhouette, the mystery is not so concealed that it cannot be understood. We seem to be at the frontier between Symbolism and naturalism; Lévy-Dhurmer seems to be 'playing' with an easily-recognizable motif, hiding it in order to give it its true meaning back after centuries of being depicted in a more 'topographical' or naturalistic way. Because the cathedral can hardly be seen at all, one can only assume that its essence is the mystery, the unknown, the concealed. The painter being Jewish, this idea certainly makes sense, as a monument dedicated to another religion might appear mysterious to him. It is

however very difficult to know whether he was a religious Jew as nothing has been written about this aspect of his life. But the mystery shrouding the cathedral could also be a reminder of how mysterious the Church can be with its dogmas. But the cathedral disappearing in the mist could also represent the diminishing number of Catholics in a country influenced by scientism and other theories. In fact, the representation of commerce (the 'bouquiniste' stalls) in front of the cathedral may well be a reminder of the importance of business over religiosity. But on the other hand, the artist may only have wanted to represent the facts as they were, leaving this painting with maybe more naturalism than Symbolism.

Albert Marquet (1875-1947) also chose Notre-Dame in the snow as a subject. After the rather bleak cityscapes presented by Lebourg, and the ghostly image of Levy-Dhurmer, we have another artist who experimented with the image of the cathedral. The artist moved to a flat on the fifth floor of 19 Quai Saint-Michel in 1908, from where he had a view towards Notre-Dame. He had already painted the monument before, and a very similar painting to the one studied here was made in 1905 when Marquet lived on the Quai des Grands-Augustins (*Notre-Dame sous la neige*, Fig. 151).

For the *Vue de Notre-Dame* which interests us (c.1910), Marquet painted very simply, using big areas of almost monochrome tones combined with strong lines supporting the composition (Fig. 152). Indeed, the lines formed by the quayside, the barge and the bridge support the verticality of the cathedral standing in the background. Like Lebourg and Lévy-Dhurmer, Marquet was not concerned about architectural details but about how he could use Notre-Dame in a new manner, even though the way Notre-

Dame is represented here can be seen as only 'topographical' to start with. The cathedral, placed in its setting by the Seine and with its two towers rising in the mist of the winter day, can be easily identified by viewers. Hence the opportunity for Marquet to depict it not just as a topographical landmark of the city but as a much more personal vision. Notre-Dame appears to have been set in an almost immobile setting: even if there are several moving figures on the quay and bridge, as well as a horse and cart, the emphasis is not on them (they are only represented by black, indistinct strokes) but rather on the strong lines of the composition leading the eye to the background and the cathedral. The muted tones used throughout the painting, as well as the static buildings, help create an atmosphere of quietness. This painting is very similar to another *Notre-Dame sous la neige* (1905)[81], which, according to François Daulte, was made out of Marquet's "besoin de poésie" (Fig. 151). He explains: "Du noir et du blanc, du gris et du beige lui suffisent pour traduire l'atmosphère particulière de Paris par un jour blanc, tiède et voilé. C'est peut-être dans cette première manière, ouatée, humide, que Marquet a le mieux assouvi son véritable besoin de poésie."[82] He adds that there is a need for poetry when "en hiver 1905, il a représenté les tours de Notre-Dame qui se détachent sur un ciel triste de jour d'hiver, quand la neige boueuse fond sur les quais et qu'un brouillard léger traîne sur la ville." The 1910 painting is so similar to the 1905 version that one can assume that it is another attempt by Marquet at evoking mood. With its very soft contours, the light mist hanging over the towers of Notre-Dame and the indistinct figures, this is almost a dream-like picture which certainly fits the 'poetic' interpretation. These pictures are difficult to place, as they are not quite topographical and 'naturalistic', but more evocative of a particular mood. One must not forget however that

the artist was also concerned with tone and making his own mark in modern painting. Thus we are here in the presence of a cathedral used in a particular winter atmosphere in order to create a modern approach to an 'old' subject. Because of its well-known shape, Notre-Dame is used by the artist as a dreamy, misty, atmospheric motif which could possibly be described in a poem.

Finally, Marquet lived in the same building as Matisse and they were friends. Marquet would have known Matisse's paintings of Notre-Dame and therefore his style may well have been inspired by Matisse's. Indeed, Elizabeth Cowling[83] points out that Marquet's monochrome pictures are not that remote from Cubism, with which Matisse experimented. But with a more 'modern' approach to painting than Marquet, Matisse's cathedrals show yet another aspect the experimentation with Notre-Dame de Paris can take.

Matisse and the experimental cathedral

This section will show how experimenting with Notre-Dame can go even further than Lebourg, Lévy-Dhurmer and Marquet. With Matisse, in 1914, the experimentation almost ceased to be figurative and leaves the viewer with a completely new outlook on the cathedral.

Henri Matisse painted several views of Notre-Dame from the window of his studio on the Quai St-Michel. He had moved to this location as early as 1895 but did not paint the scene from his window before about 1900. One can follow the development of his Notre-Dame pictures throughout the years from about that date. John Jacobus notes that

in most of these paintings "the emphasis is on providing a suggestion of the space formed by the historic monument and its surroundings: indifferent modern edifices, the connecting surfaces of the bridges and quais, the confined channel of the Seine, and sometimes but not invariably a passing barge."[84] Such a picture is *Notre-Dame*, painted circa 1900 and it is also a good example of how startling Matisse's colours can be (Fig. 153). His intense hues certainly announce his later Fauvist work. Two years later, *Notre-Dame, une fin d'après-midi* already shows signs of Matisse's advances as far as his vision of the cathedral is concerned (Fig. 154). The coloured areas are more controlled, as if to condense the sensations, and the artist seems to have understood the importance of the shutter, which forms a strong vertical on the right, giving the composition a weighted frame[85]. Moreover, the agitation present in the first canvas has disappeared, leaving room for an atmospheric rendition of the same scene. The forms are more solid and the patches of colour carry a structural value of their own. "What seems to have occurred here", notes Jacobus, "is that the daring concepts of spatial support (...) are now applicable to landscape and topographical painting."[86] So what we have here is a scene structured by colour only.

Matisse's work on Notre-Dame culminated in a canvas painted in 1914 because of the very modern manner with which the artist depicted the forms of his subject. In *Vue de Notre-Dame*, the cathedral is set against a rich blue ground but the actual scene is only hinted at (Fig. 155). The architectural elements are represented thanks to straight lines (apart from the arch of the bridge). Jack Flam notes in *Matisse: the Man and his Art* that "instead of describing the component parts of the image, Matisse has created signs for them."[87] Indeed, apart from the cathedral and the bridge we also have here an

oval green form intended to represent the foliage present by the monument. Flam sees this green as "symbolic of the season, triumphantly set into the cool blue waiting world."[88] This unusual representation made the painting difficult for most viewers to understand, but also proved how personal Notre-Dame could become, as a contemporary of Matisse noted in his diary in February 1914: "S'il [Matisse] exposait l'autre tableau, vue de sa fenêtre, de guingois, personne ne comprendrait tout de suite. Cela étonnerait, on se tairait; on ferait la moue. Pourtant pour nous c'est le plus beau des deux [the other one is the *Vue de Notre*-Dame from the Kunstmuseum Solothurn], le plus génial – celui où Matisse est le plus personnel."[89]

The main features of this painting were summarised by Anne Baldassari when it was exhibited in the 2002 *Matisse-Picasso* exhibition: it has a superimposition of naturalistic and synthetic notations; gives a "predominance to voids over filled spaces" and above all is Cubist, a fact which shows that "the painter is revealed as the true subject of painting, for it is on him that psychic as well as physical pressure of space is exerted"[90]. Matisse even said himself that "It is the tremor of the individual that counts, rather than the object which produced the emotion.[91]" So it seems that the cathedral did not actually matter as a motif as the point of this painting is within the painter rather than outside. What other clues does Matisse give us of this?

The answer can probably be found if one looks at Matisse's work in a more general way. In order to understand better the Cubist Notre-Dame, one needs to know first of all that another painting of the monument was done by the artist at exactly the same time: *Une Vue de Notre-Dame* uses the same angle from the studio window but the difference in the stylistic approach is striking (Fig. 156). A descriptive painting, this *Vue de Notre-*

Dame has nothing of the Cubist idea behind its sister painting. So it appears that the artist wanted to produce two extremely contrasting images of the same subject, the descriptive one probably helping him to make the other as different from it as possible. The first picture almost goes back to the idea of an illustration, it is descriptive, whereas the modernist painting shows the extent to which Notre-Dame can be manipulated. Being just outside his window, Notre-Dame gave Matisse the opportunity to work in a modern way: Notre-Dame is famous, it is an object which is certain. So it is good material for a reductive image whilst still being identifiable by viewers. The idea of 'reworking' a subject such as Notre-Dame throughout the years was quite common for Matisse. One striking example can be found with *La Desserte (d'après Jan Davidsz. de Heem)*. The first version Matisse made in 1893 was a faithful copy of the original, whilst the 1915 *Nature morte d'après "La Desserte" de Jan Davidsz. de Heem* was completely reworked in order to become a Cubist painting (Figs. 157 and 158).

So the Cubist Notre-Dame definitely appears like an experiment, a manipulation even, on a subject already studied, as was the case with the *Desserte*. Cubism was being developed at the time this representation of Notre-Dame was done and it is certainly possible to say that Matisse was then experimenting with this theory after he experimented with other styles. According to Elizabeth Cowling, it is as if Matisse took a familiar motif and almost questioned his art against it[92]. So what we have here is not so much an attitude towards the cathedral but rather an attitude towards one's own work. However, it has to be said that the cathedral and its surroundings made a good motif for Cubism because of their intrinsic straight lines.

Moreover, the idea that Matisse was manipulating the cathedral for the development of his own art can be supported by the fact that Matisse certainly was not a religious man even if he came from a religious family. So he would not have wanted to represent Notre-Dame from a Catholic point of view. Hilary Spurling notes in *The Unknown Matisse* that:

> His [Hippolyte Henri Matisse, Matisse's father] sons were brought up as good Republicans and Roman Catholics according to the custom of their class and time. Baptised at seven days old before he left Le Cateau, Henri was confirmed with all the other children of his age in 1881 in the church of St-Martin in Bohain. Seventy years later he said he still used the Hail Marys and Pater nosters of his childhood to calm his nerves, but for most of his life he looked back with distaste on his Catholic upbringing as part of the harsh authoritarian apparatus that had curbed and controlled his youth.[93]

So the cathedral of the 1914 Cubist painting is certainly not a religious building but one which is used by the artist for a personal aim. A cathedral, devoid of its religious meaning, utilized for an experiment because of its well-known shape. Transformed into a Cubist object, Notre-Dame becomes with Matisse a subject allowing the artist to experiment with a new theory.

From the Romantic illustrations for Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* still lingering in the 1870s and 1880s to the modernism shown by Matisse in 1914, the image of Paris's cathedral has shown how it could be transformed through a few decades. First represented as a Gothic monument laden with Romantic ideas such as the sublime, represented in an imaginative manner in the context of a story set in medieval times, its silhouette had become so embedded in the national unconscious thanks to its popularisation in photographs, illustrated books and in the press that it finally did not

need to be represented figuratively to be recognized. This chapter thus analyzed how a monument can be represented, used and even manipulated by artists to such an extent that it has little connection with its original purpose, in this case that of religion. Indeed, the Notre-Dame depicted by artists is only rarely directly connected with religion, as I have shown. It takes on completely different dimensions which serve the purpose of the artists using it as a subject.

This chapter has argued that the image of Notre-Dame could be manipulated in various ways to serve different purposes, whether pictorial, stylistic, personal or creative, and that single representations of the monument often allowed several readings. Also, Notre-Dame continued to be of use as a motif as styles shifted, from the Romanticism of illustrations, to the 'naturalism' shown by painters like Pierson, then the Symbolism of Lévy-Dhurmer, the Fauvism of Marquet and the Cubism of Matisse. With such an evolution, Notre-Dame reached with Matisse a stage where the narrative of illustrations and the details of 'naturalism' were cut out, but even then, at its most reductive, it is still a cathedral.

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[1] HUGO, V., 1975, Livre X, Chap. IV, pp. 416-417.
[2] Hugo himself wrote the libretto for the 1836 opera *La Esméralda* composed by Louise Bertin, the niece of Hector Berlioz. Other musical adaptations include *Quasimodo Hochzeit*, a German opera by Rainer Böhm and a ballet, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, choreographed by Roland Petit on a music by Maurice Jarre.
[3] François Villon, c.1431-after 1463. He wrote in 1461 a poem entitled "Ballade pour prier Notre-Dame" inspired by Paris cathedral.
[4] Paul Claudel (1868-1965), having lost his faith, found it again during a visit to Notre-Dame de Paris on Christmas day 1886. He said: "On entre à Notre-Dame en visiteur, on en ressort en pélerin !".
[5] Written by Luc Plamondon and Richard Cocciante.
[6] AUZAS, P.-M., 1951, pp. 20-35.
[7] HUGO, V., 1975, p. 1052.
[8] KILLICK, R., 1994, p.15.

[9] HUGO, V., "De la destruction des monuments en France", *Nouveau Keepsake Français*, 1832. This article was first published in August 1829 (but written in 1825) in the *Revue de Paris.*
[10] HUGO, V., *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1832.
[11] Quoted in KILLICK, R., 1994, p.15.
[12] VAN TIEGHEM, Ph., 1970, p.161.
[13] DU COLOMBIER, P., 1966, pp.202-203.
[14] KILLICK, R., 1994, p.31.
[15] *Mercure de France*, exact date unknown, Quoted in KILLICK, R., 1994, pp. 31-32.
[16] KILLICK, R., 1994, p.32.
[17] Quoted in KILLICK, R., 1994, p. 32.
[18] Ibid., p.34.
[19] SEEBACHER, J., in HUGO, V., 1975, p. 1052.
[20] Ibid., p. 1056.
[21] KILLICK, R. 1994, p. 14.
[22] HUGO, V., 1975, p. 7.
[23] Ibid., Livre III, Chap. I, p. 106.
[24] THIESSE, A.-M., 2000, p. 36.
[25] Ibid., p.72.
[26] Ibid., p.21.
[27] Ibid., p.47.
[28] In HUGO, V., 1877, tome second, p. 240.
[29] SUEUR, V., 1993, p.51.
[30] Some were published in the 1877 Eugène Hugues edition.
[31] VILTART, L., 1898, p.8.
[32] HUGO, V., 1975, Livre X, Chap. IV, pp. 416-417.
[33]SUEUR, V., 1993, p.51.
[34] HUGO, V., 1975, Livre X, Chap. IV, p. 418.
[35] *Ernest Biéler 1863-1948*, July-October 1999, p. 16.
[36] HUGO, V., [1888-91], p. 234.
[37] In HUGO, V., 1877, tome second, p. 149. This illustration was first published in the Perrotin et Garnier frères edition of 1844.
[38] DE MEIXMORON DE DOMBASLE, Ch., 1912, p. 8.
[39] Ibid., p. 3.
[40] Ibid., p. 4. The biographer adds on p. 23: "Il [de Lemud] tient une place très importante dans l'art romantique par ses lithographies".
[41] HUGO, V., 1975, Livre VIII, Chap. VI, pp. 349-350.
[42] DE MEIXMORON DE DOMBASLE, Ch., 1912, p. 11.
[43] Ibid., p. 13.
[44]HUGO, V., 1877, tome second, p. 166.
[45] HUGO, V., 1975, Livre IX, Chap. I, pp. 359.
[46] FIDELL-BEAUFORT, M., and BAILLY-HERZBERG, J., 1975, p. 34.
[47] SORLIN, P., 1969, p. 215.
[48] Ibid., p. 215.
[49] SEEBACHER, J., in HUGO, V., 1975, p. 1073.
[50] HUGO, V., 1975, Livre X, Chap. IV, pp. 422-3.
[51] Gustave Brion is considered a "narrative artist" and did illustrations for Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* before working on *Notre-Dame de Paris*. However, the illustration for *Notre-Dame* "lacked the skill of those he completed for *Les Misérables*", says WEISBERG, G. P., 1980, p. 276.
[52] HUGO, V., 1877, tome second, p. 248.
[53] HUGO, V, 1975, Livre XI, Chap. II, p. 494.
[54] HUGO, V, 1877, tome second, p. 339.
[55]DE MEIXMORON DE DOMBASLE, Ch., 1912, p. 9.

[56] HUGO, V., [1888-1891], p. 354.
[57] He also obtained a bronze medal at the Salon des Artistes Français in 1900 for the Exposition Universelle. Bénézit, Tome 7, 1999, p. 195.
[58] SCHURR, 1982, Vol. 3, p.138.
[59] LANGLOIS, C., in BOUTRY, P. et al., 1991, p. 238.
[60] In SORLIN, P, 1969, p. 218.
[61] LANGLOIS, C., in BOUTRY, P. et al., 1991, p. 246.
[62] Ibid., p. 241.
[63] SORLIN, P, 1969, p. 218.
[64] Bénézit, Tome 10, 1999, p. 908.
[65] *Le Monde illustré*, 5 février 1910, p. 83.
[66] This 'ponton-débarcadère' is so labelled under a photograph of it published in RENDU, M.-A.,1997, p.21.
[67] RENDU, M.-A.,1997, p.57.
[68] Ibid., p.58.
[69] Ibid., p.32.
[70] *Le Monde illustré*, 5 février 1910, p. 83.
[71] BÉNÉZIT, E., 1999, Tome 1, p. 730.
[72] DUBY, G., (sous la direction de), 1988, p. 366.
[73] Ibid., p.366.
[74] According to Léonce Bénédite's catalogue of Lebourg's work.
[75] LESPINASSE, F., 1995, p.52.
[76] POUGETOUX, A., 1994, p. 106.
[77] FOUCART, J, LACAMBRE, G., et al., 1973, p. 34.
[78] Jean Chatelain in *Autour de Lévy-Dhurmer*, 1973, p. 6.
[79] *La Plume*, 1 Feb. 1896.
[80] Petit Larousse 2003.
[81] *Notre-Dame sous la Neige*, 1905 (painted from 25 Quai des Grands Augustins), oil on canvas, 65 x 82 cm, signed lower right: Marquet, Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne.
[82] DAULTE, F., 1988, p.26.
[83] In conversation, January 2004.
[84] JACOBUS, J., 1973, p. 96.
[85] Ibid., p. 98.
[86] Ibid., p. 98.
[87] FLAM, J., 1986, p. 380.
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[90] COWLING, E., BALDASSARI, A. et al., 2002, p. 126.
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[92] In conversation, January 2004.
[93]SPURLING, H., 1998, p. 22.

Conclusion

Ce que disent les cathédrales,
Soit qu'un baptême y jase au bord des eaux lustrales,
Soit qu'au peuple, autour d'un cercueil,
Un orgue aux ondes sépulcrales
Y verse un vin funèbre et l'ivresse du deuil,
Soit que la foule autour des tables
S'y presse aux repas délectables,
Soit qu'un prêtre vêtu de blanc
Y rayonne au fond de sa chaise,
Soit que la chaire y tonne ou soit qu'elle se taise,
Heureux le cœur qui l'écoute en tremblant !
Heureux celui qui vous écoute,
Vagues frémissements des ailes sous la voûte!

Germain Nouveau, *Les Cathédrales*, 1879-1881 (first published 1904)[1]

One finds in the words of Symbolist poet Germain Nouveau, quoted above, the idea present throughout this thesis that the image of the cathedral is indeed a very complex one. Not only can a cathedral be represented in different ways (literary or artistically), it can also be represented in a wide variety of media and styles, be it a novel, a poem, a guidebook, a schoolbook, a dictionary, a painting, an illustration for a magazine, a drawing and so on. If Nouveau insists on the various religious experiences to be had in the cathedral, he also mentions in the last three lines the feelings the cathedral may provoke in those who visit it, and throughout the whole poem develops the idea of the cathedrals' grandeur. Such an admiration for cathedrals may be found in many other publications of various kinds. Schoolbooks like *Le Tour de la France par deux Enfants* (first published 1877)[2] associated French cathedrals with pride for one's national treasures, whilst poems by Catholic author Charles Péguy underlined the spiritual experience of the author during his pilgrimage to Chartres in 1914[3]. Other texts may be mentioned, such as Emile Zola's *Le Rêve*, a

work of fiction based on a cathedral which becomes one of the main characters of the novel[4].

One finds in the visual documents studied in this thesis other multi-faceted creative uses of cathedrals as repositories of complex meanings, sometimes consistent, sometimes contradictory, at this period. The cathedral may for instance be presented and/or interpreted as nationalist, republican, anarchist, Catholic, naturalist, symbolist or modernist, to cite but the main possible approaches. Analysing is almost always very complex as these images can be read in several different ways, the same picture carrying different meanings depending on the viewpoint chosen for the analysis. This is the case with for instance with Pissarro's *Les Toits du Vieux Rouen* (1896), which can be interpreted as an anarchist image using the cathedral as the embodiment of the communal work of past generations (Fig. 118). But the same cathedral image may also be seen as an overwhelming presence representing the dominance of the Church over the people. Another example is Lemaître's *Vue de Rouen* (1891), with the cathedral in the background (Fig. 107). This may be interpreted, depending on one's viewpoint, as a picture showing a strong connection between the city, its inhabitants and its cathedral, thus making the cathedral an essential part of their lives, or, if one takes the opposite viewpoint, as a picture showing the distance separating the Rouennais from their cathedral in an increasingly anti-clerical context. Thus, from Molière's dismissal of the "fade goust des ornemens gothiques"[5] (1669), to Matisse's modernist vision of Notre-Dame de Paris in 1914 (Fig. 155), this thesis retraced the multiple and complex visions French cathedrals generated between the Franco-Prussian War and the beginning of the Great War.

After being criticised by Voltaire in 1756 as belonging to a dark epoch, governed by "des coutumes sauvages"[6], French Gothic buildings were rediscovered in the late 18th and early 19th centuries by scholars and Romantics alike. In England, Germany and France, a common interest in medieval monuments grew in conjunction with the rediscovery of emotions such as melancholy and reverie. Praise for the Gothic was also a way for the monarchist Restoration of 1814 to underline its connections with pre-revolutionary France, distancing itself from the classicism of the Napoleonic era. Combined with a growing academic interest for all things medieval, the awareness of the greatness of Gothic art spread throughout the arts, from architecture, to painting and writing.

The interest continued into the period dealt with in this thesis, 1870-1914. Because it had been rediscovered, presented to a wide audience thanks to publications such as Baron Taylor's *Voyages Pittoresques* or through galleries like the *Musée des Monuments Français*, because it had been rebuilt or renovated by architects such as Viollet-le-Duc, the Gothic was, by 1870, a well-known, essential part of the French heritage. It was a style to be proud of, eminently French, a proof of the many skills of medieval builders. Thus the image of the cathedral, made positive by several decades of scholarly research and by many depictions, continued to be used by artists between 1870 and 1914 in order to serve either political agendas or pictorial experimentations, with many other nuances in between. It is indeed the positive notoriety cathedrals had gained in the first decades of the 19th century which made it possible for later artists to use the buildings in various ways. The silhouette

of the Gothic cathedral, inscribed in the collective memory, allowed artists of all creeds to manipulate it to serve very varied purposes.

The first 'manipulation' I developed took place in the context of the *Année Terrible*, when the image of the Gothic French cathedral became a symbol of the glory of France. This was particularly obvious in newspapers and magazine drawings published during the Franco-Prussian war and the siege of the capital. The French cathedrals (Paris or Strasbourg in particular) stood proud even in the midst of desolation and defeat. In war representations, the French cathedral appears as a symbol of pride, a reassuring presence enticing the viewer to continue to fight for his motherland, a country which produced monuments such as Notre-Dame de Paris. Even during the worst of times, as was the case with a drawing of Strasbourg being bombed in the night, the cathedral stands up straight, inviting the people not to despair (Fig. 35).

This theme of the patriotism of the cathedral in war is of particular interest here, because a connection may be made between the representations made during the *Année Terrible* and those made during the 1914-1918 conflict, underlining a continuity in the use of cathedrals in this context. Indeed, my research uncovered a number of representations of cathedrals made during the Great War which also convey patriotic messages. The numerous images of Reims cathedral destroyed by German bombs come to mind, as well as for instance a poster inviting the French to support their "héroïques soldats" by participating in the "emprunt de la défense nationale": the poster represents victorious soldiers marching in the streets of

Strasbourg, in front of the city's cathedral, bathed in the rays of the sun (Figs. 159 and 160).

The didactic aspect of cathedrals, analysed in Chapter Two, showed in even greater detail how French cathedrals were used by state and religious schoolbooks alike in order to promote a particular view of the past and of French culture. The cathedral was mostly presented as a French monument (and certainly not a Gothic one, as this would have German overtones), which all children should learn to be proud of. The motif of the cathedral was used to unite future citizens around a common image of enduring French cultural values. This however opened up a paradox, that of a secular republic using a church as a national emblem to carry its own values. All through the early period of the Third Republic (1870-1914), the cathedral remained a very important image, and it appears paradoxical that a Republic which was in many ways anti-clerical presented the image of the cathedral as a potent symbol. This can however be explained by three distinct yet interlinked reasons. First, the cathedral image celebrates the French people as creators of great monuments throughout time. The cathedral stands as a reminder of the talent of French builders and artists, a talent present through the centuries. The second reason is that the cathedral itself is a work of art, an aesthetically pleasing piece of architecture, of which the French people should be proud as it is strongly connected with their own past and their own culture (the schoolbooks quoted in Chapter Two insisted on the fact that Gothic art should be called "French"). Finally, the Republic also used the image of cathedrals in order to appropriate images from the Church and promote itself. Values like justice or family for instance, once associated with the

Church, became strongly connected with the Third Republic. Hence, when the image of a cathedral appears in a Republican context, it is linked to a set of values promoted by the Republic. This is evident in the murals made for *mairies*, where the cathedrals adorning the walls of the public buildings carried a strong republican message.

The political theme was taken further with the study in Chapter Five of the manner in which some cathedral representations may be read as anarchist or as bearing social tendencies. This is of particular interest because it proves that opposite political tendencies were using the same symbols for very different purposes. Whilst the Republican government supported the image of cathedrals as a means to encourage the nation to fight, or to be proud of their heritage, the anarchists used the same image to support their cause, that of the independence of the workers and of their unity against the authorities.

This paradox of the one cathedral serving several purposes was also the theme of the chapter on the religious cathedral, showing how the Catholics were also using 'their' cathedrals. It had already been demonstrated in Chapter Two that Catholic schoolbooks took a rather conservative stance as far as religion and politics were concerned, but this chapter delved further into the Catholic aspect of cathedrals. Their importance was shown through the use of the buildings for Catholic festivals, as well as their pictorial meaning. Overall, it appeared that the cathedrals were not necessarily only represented as patriotic objects, but showed either the faith of the French people or the difficulties of the Church in an increasingly secular era. The use of cathedrals for state funerals (in particular that of Félix Faure) was another

paradoxical situation, as heads of state or important secular figures had their funeral celebrated in Notre-Dame.

There is therefore no doubt as to the particularly multivalent aspects of the French cathedrals between 1870 and 1914. It is impossible to classify them in one category or another, as the various aspects all appear to overlap. The cathedral is certainly nationalistic, but can at the same time be presented as a Republican or as a monarchic symbol. It can be represented as Catholic, and also as anti-Republican. It may be anarchist, pro-social and also anti-capitalist and therefore wanting the destruction of the Republic too. So what we have here is completely opposed tendencies using the same symbol to serve what can be diametrically opposed purposes, or sometimes even the same one (both the radical Catholics and the anarchists wished for the destruction of the Republic).

Another aspect developed in this thesis was that of the 'experimentations' artists were able to carry out because of the notoriety of the cathedrals they represented. They based their works on a silhouette so well-known by the public that it lent itself to new kinds of representations. Dumont's cubist canvas of Rouen cathedral can be put in parallel with Matisse's representation of Notre-Dame de Paris in 1914. Even though they were working in different styles, both artists were using the shape of the cathedral as an object fit for experiment. These are the more 'extreme' examples, but Monet, Pissarro and Luce for instance also used the cathedral as a way of developing something new in their art. This idea of the cathedral as an 'experimentation' object continued after 1914, for example with two works by Charles Dufresne (1876-1938),

who represented Noyon cathedral in a very modern manner in 1917 and 1918 (these paintings are in fact very patriotic too, showing once again how cathedral pictures often have several aspects to them; Figs 161 and 162). Paul Signac, who did a number of pointillist images showing Notre-Dame de Paris, in particular in the 1920s, may certainly also be considered as a painter who 'utilised' cathedrals for artistic purposes (Fig. 163).

Only very few cathedral interiors appear to have been represented between 1870 and 1914. There are several reasons for this. First most of the artists mentioned in this thesis were landscape painters, used to dealing with forms; they saw the cathedral as a form in space. Second, the artist was an observer rather than a participant. He represented the cathedral as an outsider. Going in would have possibly meant an involvement with religion which would have defeated the point of observation; it may have looked too pious to paint inside. Third, many of the pictures studied here showed cathedrals in their city, in their environment, because the artist may have wanted to make a point about it. Going inside would occult the environment completely. So the interiors represented were either rather spiritual (Helleu, Figs. 75 and 76) or showed a particular event (funeral pictures).

So what was the cathedral between 1870 and 1914? No easy answer may be given, and Nouveau's poem, quoted at the beginning of this conclusion, gives a hint at the number of aspects cathedrals may take. The Gothic cathedral, or, rather, the French cathedral, took on so many aspects that it would be impossible to make up a precise typology of the works representing cathedrals during that period. This thesis

analysed a number of representations in order to understand the dynamics behind the cathedral, but, as we saw, there is no easy answer. As demonstrated in the two case-study chapters on Rouen and Notre-Dame de Paris, the images representing cathedrals can be extremely diverse and carry very different meanings. It is worth remembering, however, that in order to read these meanings one would usually need to be aware of the contextual background of each work. So to the novice, they may not mean very much, unless the message has been made unmistakably clear (as is the case in many patriotic war-time images). Would this mean that the cathedral has, too, a personal meaning which differs for each and every viewer? This meaning, dependant on education, sensitivity, attraction to art and many other factors, added to the numerous meanings already mentioned, eventually forms an enormous sum of possibilities. But maybe this is what makes the cathedral the subject of so many pictorial and literary works of art: the fact that it is different and has a particular attraction for everyone. The cathedrals still fascinate, over seven hundred years after they were built, and their admirers come from all walks of life. They continue to convey meaning for their viewers, whether these are on canvas, on paper, or in any other form.

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[1] NOUVEAU, G., 1970, p. 513 (first published 1904).

[2] "Les voûtes de Notre-Dame, depuis lors, n'ont cessé de retentir chaque fois que la France était en péril ou en fête. Leurs cloches ont sonné non seulement pour la naissance ou la mort d'un homme, mais pour les espérances et les deuils de la patrie entière.
-Oh! Dit Julien, entrons donc nous aussi à Notre-Dame, voulez-vous, mon oncle? Et nous y prierons Dieu tous les trois pour la grandeur de la France."
BRUNO, G., 1882. See chapter 3.

[3] *Ô tours de Notre-Dame,*
Droites, robustes,
Immense brise-lame,
Justes, augustes.
PEGUY, C., Extract from the *Quatrains*, 1914.

[4] "Mais la cathédrale, à sa droite, la masse énorme qui bouchait le ciel, la surprenait plus encore. Chaque matin, elle s'imaginait la voir pour la première fois, émue de sa découverte, comprenant que ces vieilles pierres aimaient et pensaient comme elle. Cela n'était point raisonné, elle n'avait aucune science, elle s'abandonnait a l'envolée mystique de la géante, dont l'enfantement avait duré trois siècles et où se superposaient les croyances des générations."
Emile Zola, *Le Rêve*, 1911, pp. 71-72.
[5] Molière, *La Gloire du Val-de-Grâce*, 1669, quoted in ROBSON-SCOTT, W.D., 1965, p.43.
[6] VOLTAIRE, *Essai sur les* Moeurs, chap. XII, 1756.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

The Gothic and cathedrals before 1870 – Chronology

1669	Writer Molière voices his disgust for for Gothic ornament. He despised the "fade goust des ornemens gothiques; ces monstres odieux des siècles ignorants"[1].
18th century	Philosophers celebrate the victory of the light of reason above medieval obscurantism. Jean d'Alembert writes in the *Encyclopédie* (1751-1780) that the Middle Ages were nothing but "un long intervalle d'ignorance"[2] and Jean-Jacques Rousseau claims in 1753 that "les portails de nos églises gothiques [ne subsistent que] pour la honte de ceux qui ont eu la patience de les faire"[3]. A few monographs on cathedrals are however published, such as *Histoire de l'Eglise Cathédrale de Rouen* by J.F. Pommeraye (1686) and *Description nouvelle de la cathédrale de Strasbourg et de sa fameuse Tour* by F.-J. Böhm (1743). The tower of Strasbourg cathedral is described as "un Chef d'oeuvre de l'Architecture; n'y en aïant aucune, qui puisse lui être comparée, tant pour la hauteur et la solidité, que pour la proportion et la délicatesse des parties, dont elle est composée"[4].
1753	Horace Walpole builds his neo-Gothic villa at Strawberry Hill.
1772	Johann Wofgang von Goethe publishes *Von Deutscher Baukunst* in which he praises Gothic art and in particular Strasbourg cathedral.
1773	Johann Gottfried von Herder, Justus Möser and Goethe published under the title *Von DeutscherArt und Kunst* a collection of essays in which the interest for the Middle Ages, nationalism and Gothic art appear clearly.
1798	William Wordsworth writes *Tintern Abbey*, a poem based on a Gothic ruin.

c.1800 to c.1824	From about 1800 paintings which were later classified as belonging to the *genre troubadour* appear at the Salon. They show French historical scenes in Gothic settings. In 1802 Fleury Richard exhibits *Valentine de Milan pleurant son époux* and in 1823 *Mort du Prince de Talmont*.
1802	Chateaubriand writes *Le Génie du Christianisme*, in which he describes Gothic art over several famous pages. He is captivated by medieval art, by "ces basiliques, toutes moussues, toutes remplies des générations des décédés et des âmes de [nos] pères…[ces] voûtes toutes noires de siècles"[5].
1814-1830	Restoration of the monarchy in France, associated with a return to medieval art as a way to connect with the pre-Revolutionary era and to break off from the Classicism of Napoleonism. Many paintings in the 1817 Salon represent scenes and monarchs of the *Ancien Régime*.
1817 and 1819	Walter Scott writes *Rob Roy* and *Ivanhoe*, amongst many other novels set in the Middle Ages. Many are translated into French from 1816 onwards and Scott was nearly as popular in France as in Britain.
1821-1878	Baron Taylor and Charles Nodier publish the *Voyages pittoresques et romantiques dans l'ancienne France*, an important source of pictorial information on medieval monuments.
1831	Victor Hugo publishes *Notre-Dame de Paris*, "un vibrant plaidoyer en faveur de la sauvegarde médiévale"[6]. Vitet becomes the first *Inspecteur Général des Monuments historiques*, thus heading the governmental service for the protection of historical monuments.
1833	Writer and politician Charles de Montalembert calls for the preservation and imitation of medieval monuments[7].

1844-64	Eugène Viollet-le-Duc works on the restoration of Notre-Dame de Paris. In 1854 he salutes "notre vénérable architecture religieuse nationale" and added "la cathédrale est encore debout, et c'est une de celles qui parlent le plus haut, gardons-nous de la laisser périr soit par insouciance soit pour des raisons d'économie mal entendue. (...) Chaque cathédrale ruinée fera dans notre pays un vide qui ne se pourra jamais combler."[8] In 1867, in his *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'Architecture française*, he defines cathedrals as "le premier germe du génie français" and hopes that his century "saura les conserver"[9].
1844-81	Adolphe-Napoléon Didron publishes the *Annales Archéologiques*, which provides a platform for Gothic Revivalists to publish articles or Gothic Revival designs.

[1] MOLIÈRE, *La Gloire du Val-de-Grâce*, 1669.
[2] D'ALEMBERT, 1965, p.76.
[3] ROUSSEAU, J.-J., *Lettre sur la musique française*, 1753.
[4] BOHM, F.-J., 1743, Préface.
[5] CHATEAUBRIAND, F.-R. de, Part 3, Book 1, Ch. 8
[6] AMALVI, C., 1996, p. 26.
[7] In an article entitled "Du Vandalisme en France", 1 March 1833.
[8] Cited in AUZAS, P.-M., 1979, p. 115.
[9] VIOLLET-LE-DUC, E., 1867, Tome deuxième, p.285

APPENDIX TWO

Extracts from Sarcey, F., *Le Siège de Paris*, London, 1896.

Francisque Sarcey (1828- 1899), a journalist, dramatic critic and fiction writer, presented in *Le Siège de Paris* "a picturesque, anecdotic, and moral representation of what he saw and felt"[1] In an account which is often sharp and ironic, he tells the sufferings and the courage of his fellow Parisians. One of the subjects he refers to with rather good humour to start with, is that of food. Beef and other traditional meats becoming unavailable, the Parisians have to turn to more unusual choices: "Je ne parle pas du mulet et de l'âne, qui se vendaient couramment, et à ce propos me sera-t-il permis de dire que la chair de l'âne est vraiment bonne; celle du mulet exquise (...). Mais les animaux les plus fantastiques du Jardin d'acclimatation y passèrent (...). Pour faire pendant à cette boucherie aristocratique, il y eut des boucheries de chats, de chiens et de rats."[2] However, after a rather light tone for the first part of the siege, the mood tends to change and the writer turns to darker reflections:

Tout ce mois de décembre fut terriblement dur à traverser. Les privations allaient croissant, à mesure que diminuaient le stock de nos approvisionnements. (...)Quand on en vint à cette mesure nécessaire du rationnement, il était trop tard. On ne donna plus que trois cents grammes de pain par tête et par jour! Trois cents grammes! comme s'il eût été possible de vivre avec trois cents grammes de nourriture! et de quel pain, grand Dieu! Celui que nous avons mangé dans les derniers jours du siège était un composé, noirâtre et gluant, de choses innomées, où il entrait de tout, sans en excepter du blé.[3]

Gradually more and more Parisians died under the terrible conditions and Sarcey is appalled by the way funerals are now dealt with and the apparent disinterest and lack of respect for the dead, symptomatic of the mood of the besieged people:

La mortalité montait de semaine en semaine, traînant une effroyable marée de victimes. (...) On ne voyait que corbillards, qui s'acheminaient seuls vers le cimetière. Pour les enfants, on y faisait moins de façons encore. Un croquemort prenait sous son bras le petit cercueil, et le portait, comme un paquet de n'importe quoi, jusqu'au trou commun, où il le jetait avec les autres. Les cimetières parisiens, déjà trop étroits, regorgeaient de cadavres, dont on ne savait où se débarrasser. Cette incurie du tombeau était un bien lugubre symptôme chez une population qui pousse la piété pour les morts jusqu'à la superstition.[4]

However, in spite of all the miseries, Sarcey also insists on the formidable positive spirit which kept the Parisians going for most of the siege. He celebrates their courage and acceptance of their fate, and above all their unfailing patriotism:

Non, je ne saurais trop répéter à nos frères de province avec quel indomptable courage, avec quelle touchante résignation, avec quel invincible sentiment de patriotisme toute cette population supporta les rigueurs de cette longue misère. (...) Mais les femmes! les pauvres femmes! par ces abominables froids de décembre elles faisaient la queue, toute la journée, chez le boulanger, chez le boucher, chez l'épicier, chez le marchand de bois, à la mairie. Aucune ne murmurait; jamais je n'ai entendu sortir d'une seule de ces bouches, accoutumées au [sic] dures paroles, un mot impie contre la France; c'étaient elles les plus enragées pour que l'on tînt jusqu'au dernier morceau de pain.[5]

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[1] From the Introduction to Sarcey, F., 1896. Introduction by F.B. Kirkman, p.13.
[2] Sarcey, F., 1896, pp. 71-72.
[3] Sarcey, F., 1896, pp. 88-89.
[4] Sarcey, F., 1896, p. 92.
[5] Sarcey F., 1896, pp. 91-92.

APPENDIX THREE

Extracts from Manet, E., *Lettres du Siège de Paris*, Thonon-les-Bains, 2002

On 30 September 1870, Edouard Manet wrote to his wife: "en ce moment on ne prend plus de café au lait, les bouchers n'ouvrent plus que trois fois dans la semaine, et l'on fait queue à leur porte depuis quatre heures du matin, et les derniers n'ont rien."[1]. This was followed on 7 November by "dans peu de temps on n'aura plus de quoi manger"[2] and on 7 December by "il n'y a rien à manger ici."[3]

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[1] p.13.
[2] p.22.
[3] p.24.

APPENDIX FOUR

Le Monde illustré, a weekly magazine, chose to illustrate its front page on 29 October 1870 a drawing representing the interior of a dovecot (Fig. 28). The same issue carries an illustrated article entitled 'les pigeons voyageurs', in which the author acknowledges that the topic "inspire un si puissant intérêt au milieu des circonstances exceptionelles que nous traversons."[i]

The daily paper *Le Français* dated 11 January 1871, publishes a text written by Gambetta and probably sent by carrier pigeon, in which the statesman himself praises those birds: "Quant aux pigeons, notre plus précieuse ressource, elle nous fait aujourd'hui à peu près défaut(...)". On 10 January 1871, *Le Français* referred to the carrier pigeons under the title "Respect aux pigeons". This article reproduced a text first published in the Journal Officiel instructing the population on the appropriate behaviour to be had in the presence of the animals. They insist particularly on the fact that people should refrain from chasing the birds, as it disorients them and therefore leads to the late arrival of the messages they are carrying: "Il est donc déplorable de voir certaines personnes, poussées par un zèle inopportun, se livrer à la chasse de ces malheureux oiseaux, car elles ne réussissent presque jamais qu'à les effrayer et, par suite, à *les désorienter* (...). Ce malencontreux empressement n'a donc servi qu'à reculer de quelques heures l'arrivée des nouvelles." The article also warns that a pigeon who has to fight against someone loses feathers in the struggle and is not any more in a condition to make another long flight, therefore the "précieux messagers" should be protected.

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[i] *Le Monde illustré*, n. 707, 29 Octobre 1870, p. 276.

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